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ABSTRACT

During the age of agriculturally based empires, various conquerors from the western Mediterranean to East Asia brought large population areas under their own centralized authority. Gradually many of these conquerors came to realize that, although military might was necessary to gain control over an area, sheer force of arms was not sufficient to govern effectively and ensure the loyalty and obedience of one's subjects. The Chinese would say: "You can win a kingdom from horseback, but you cannot rule from there." The historic period covered in this unit runs from Alexander of Macedonia's consolidation of his conquests (later fourth-century B.C.E.) to the rise of China's Sui Dynasty (581-618 C.E.) which appropriated Buddhist values and laid conditions for their adaptation in Korea and Japan. The objectives of this unit are: (1) to understand the concept of political legitimacy (what makes people believe that the ruler has the right to rule and they should obey his or her commands); (2) to identify and understand some of the different bases of legitimacy such as power, heredity, the ballot, and moral force; (3) to identify and understand symbols of power such as a crown and other regalia; (4) to understand Ashoka's use of moral authority instead of military might as a basis for legitimacy; (5) to examine the meaning of the "stupa" and how it was associated with political power and legitimacy; and (6) to investigate ways that rulers in Southeast and East Asia adapted the Ashokan model as a source of legitimacy. Establishing legitimacy is a challenge for any leader or government. Therefore, the concepts examined in this unit are applicable to many periods of history, as well as to civics or government courses. The unit also helps to examine cultural diffusion and the spread of religious ideas. Teaching materials that apply to national standards for history are provided. (Contains 16 references.) (BT)

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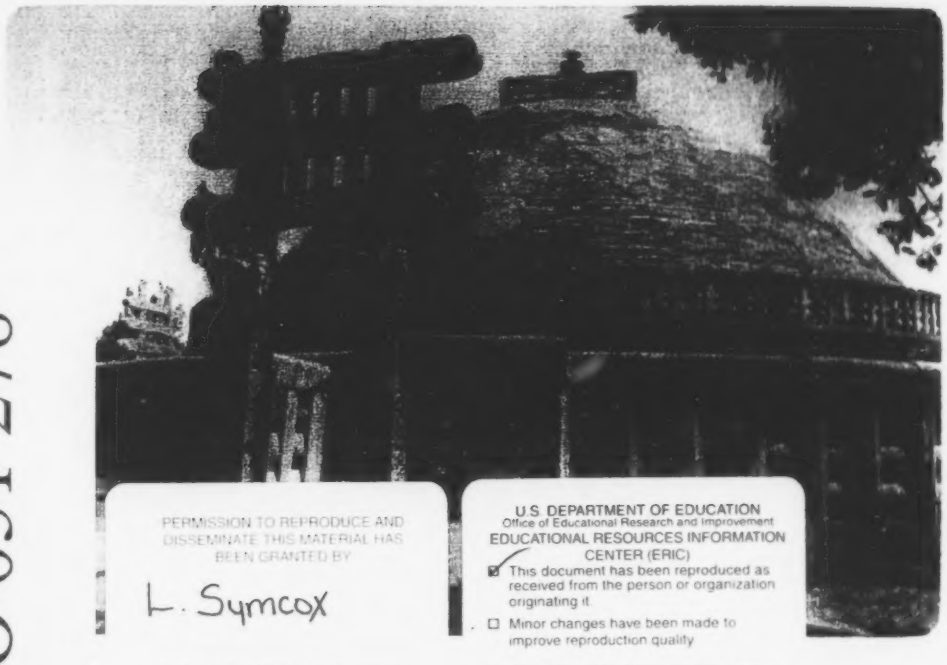
# Emperor Ashoka of India
# What Makes a Ruler Legitimate?

**A Unit of Study for Grades 7–12**

Jean Elliott Johnson
Donald James Johnson



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COVER ILLUSTRATION: Great Stupa at Sanchi. Photo by Jean Elliott Johnson.

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# What Makes a Ruler Legitimate?

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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# Introduction

## Approach and Rationale

The National Center for History in the Schools has developed the following collection of lessons for teaching with primary sources. Our units are the fruit of a collaboration between history professors and experienced teachers of World History. They represent specific "dramatic episodes" in history from which you and your students can pause to delve into the deeper meanings of these selected landmark events and explore their wider context in the great historical narrative. By studying a crucial turning-point in history the student becomes aware that choices had to be made by real human beings, that those decisions were the result of specific factors, and that they set in motion a series of historical consequences. We have selected dramatic episodes that bring alive that decision-making process. We hope that through this approach, your students will realize that history is an ongoing, open-ended process, and that the decisions they make today create the conditions of tomorrow's history.

Our teaching units are based on primary sources, taken from government documents, artifacts, magazines, newspapers, films, and literature from the period under study. What we hope you achieve using primary source documents in these lessons is to have your students connect more intimately with the past. In this way we hope to recreate for your students a sense of "being there," a sense of seeing history through the eyes of the very people who were making decisions. This will help your students develop historical empathy, to realize that history is not an impersonal process divorced from real people like themselves. At the same time, by analyzing primary sources, students will actually practice the historian's craft, discovering for themselves how to analyze evidence, establish a valid interpretation and construct a coherent narrative in which all the relevant factors play a part.

## Content and Organization

Within this unit, you will find: 1) Unit Objectives, 2) Correlation to the National History Standards, 3) Teacher Background Materials, 4) Lesson Plans, and 5) Student Resources. This unit, as we have said above, focuses on certain key moments in time and should be used as a supplement to your customary course materials. Although these lessons are recommended for grades 7–10, they can be adapted for other grade levels.The teacher background section should provide you with a good overview of the entire unit and with the historical information and context necessary to link the specific "dramatic moment" to the larger historical narrative. You may consult it for your own use, and you may choose to share it with students if they are of a sufficient grade level to understand the materials.

# Teacher's Background

## I. Unit Overview

During the age of agriculturally based empires, various conquerors from the western Mediterranean to East Asia brought large areas of populations under their own centralized authority. Gradually many of these conquerors came to realize that although military might was necessary to gain control over an area, sheer force of arms was not sufficient to govern effectively and ensure the loyalty and obedience of one's subjects. The Chinese would say: "You can win a kingdom from horseback, but you cannot rule from there." What strategies and policies besides raw force can leaders use to maintain their control and authority and ensure that people feel they have the right to rule and will obey their orders?

We will examine appeals for legitimacy, "the right to rule," based on such strategies as heredity, divinity, charisma, tolerance, law, and appeal to moral authority. After the rise of new religions such as Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, and Confucianism, and later Christianity and Islam, would-be emperors and kings had available a rich storehouse of ethical and religious symbols on which to draw to try to establish a more popular base for absolute rule. Newly victorious kings applied religious principles to support claims that they were legitimate, resting their authority on a moral basis, not merely on the exercise of military power and fear.

A brief introduction will show how ancient rulers typically rested their authority on military force. Then we will examine that model of kingly authority to the Mauryan empire in India (322–185 B.C.E.). We will compare the first Mauryan ruler's appreciation of the Indian ideal of *artha*, meaning the "science of survival," with the attempt of the Emperor Ashoka (273–232 B.C.E.) to legitimate his government. We shall look at both the historic Ashoka's strategy for ruling a pluralistic society and the legendary Ashoka who emerged in the succeeding centuries. We will also explore ways that rulers in both Southeast and the Sui dynasty in China tried to emulate both the historic and legendary Ashoka to support their claims of legitimacy. (Note that in some books Ashoka is spelled "Asoka.")

## II. Unit Context

This unit focuses on the how rulers establish legitimacy, that is, make their subjects believe they have the right to rule. The historic period covered runs from Alexander of Macedonia's consolidation of his conquests (later fourth-century B.C.E.) to the rise of China's Sui Dynasty (581-618 C.E.), which appropriated Buddhist values and laid conditions for their adaptation in Korea and Japan. Establishing legitimacy is a challenge for any leader or government. Therefore, the concepts examined here are applicable to many periods of history, as well as to civics or government courses.

## III. Correlation with the National Standards for World History

"Emperor Ashoka of India: What Makes a Ruler Legitimate?" provides teaching materials that address the *National Standards for History*, Basic Edition, (National Center for History in the Schools, UCLA, 1996), **World History**, **Era 3**, **Standard 2C** (Persian empire) and **2D** (Alexander of Macedonia); and **Standard 3C** (Unification of China) and **3D** (Mauryan empire). Also **Era 4, Standard 1D** (expansion of Hindu and Buddhist traditions), **3A** (Sui & Tang Dynasties), and **3B** (Chinese influence on Korea and Japan).

Because these lessons are organized around the thematic thread of political legitimization, teachers can use readings, activities, and insights from this unit as they examine examples of legitimization addressed in other sections of the National History Standards. The unit is also helpful in examining cultural diffusion and the spread of religious ideas.

## IV. Unit Objectives

1. To understand the concept of political legitimacy, what makes people believe that the ruler has the right to rule, and that they should obey his or her commands.

2. To identify and understand some of the different bases of legitimacy such as power, heredity, the ballot, and moral force.

3. To identify and understand symbols of power such as a crown and other regalia.

4. To understand Ashoka's use of moral authority instead of military might as a basis for legitimacy.

5. To examine the meaning of the *stupa* and how it was associated with political power and legitimacy.

6. To investigate ways in which rulers in Southeast and East Asia adapted the Ashokan model as a source of legitimacy.

## V. Lesson Plans

1. What Makes People Obey Rulers: The Question of Legitimacy

2. The Early Mauyran Empire's Basis of Rule and Legitimacy

3. Emperor Ashoka: Rule by *Dhamma*

4. The Legendary Ashoka

5. Ashoka's Influence Spreads to Southeast Asia and East Asia

## VI. Introductory Activities

1. Ask students in the class if they would obey you if you told them to:
   - Read a chapter in the textbook and take a quiz on the information.
   - Do the shopping for your family.
   - Take off their shirts or sweaters and let you listen to their heart.
   - Enlist in the army.
2. Discuss why they would or would not follow these orders. What orders from a teacher would they obey? What if a parent gave the orders? Who would they obey for each of those commands? Why?
3. Discuss what a teacher can do if a student refuses to obey. What can other persons in authority do to make people obey their commands?
4. Review historic examples students have studied of people obeying rulers such as Pericles, Moses, or Pharaoh. Why did they do so? What makes the American people willing to accept a new president and allow him to govern?
5. Review examples of people ignoring or disobeying the government. What were some historic examples of people revolting against rulers (e.g. Spartacus against Rome, the French against Louis XVI, British colonists against George III).
6. What happens when a large group of people refuse to accept the command or authority of a leader or a government?
7. Have the class brainstorm various reasons why people obey their rulers. That is, what are some of the things that make people think a ruler has legitimacy? Ask the class to make an hypothesis about effective ways leaders or rulers have to make sure people will obey them.
8. Introduce or review the idea of symbols and symbolic meaning. What would happen if you burned an American flag or a Christian cross? What would happen if you drew a swastika on the blackboard? What type of symbols might convince people in a pluralistic culture that their leaders have legitimacy? Ask students to brainstorm symbols of legitimacy, for example, uniforms people in authority wear or titles used to address important people.

## Time Line

| | |
|---|---|
| 1500–800 B.C.E. | Vedic Age, India |
| 480–221 B.C.E. | Era of Warring States, China |
| c. 630–533 B.C.E. | Zoroaster |
| 6th century B.C.E. | Lao-Tzu |
| 567–486 B.C.E. | Gautama the Buddha |
| 551–479 B.C.E. | Confucius |
| 550–330 B.C.E. | Achaemenid Persian Empire |
| 507–31 B.C.E. | Roman Republic |
| 458–429 B.C.E. | Pericles in Athens |
| 333–323 B.C.E. | Alexander of Macedonia's Military Conquests |
| 322–185 B.C.E. | Mauryan Empire in India |
| 322–297 B.C.E. | Chandragupta Maurya rules Mauryan Empire |
| 273–232 B.C.E. | Ashoka Maurya |
| 221–210 B.C.E. | Shi Huang Di rules as First Emperor of Qin Dynasty |
| 221–207 B.C.E. | Chin Dynasty, China |
| 206 B.C.E.–220 C.E. | Han Empire, China |
| c. 100 B.C.E. | Travel and Trade along Silk Roads established |
| 1st century B.C.E. | Split between Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism |
| 31 B.C.E. to 476 C.E. | Roman Empire |
| 1st to 6th centuries C.E. | Funan Kingdom, Mainland, Southeast Asia |
| 3 B.C.E. | Birth of Jesus |
| c. 100 C.E. | Fujan Kingdom, Southeast Asia |
| 48-250 C.E. | Kushan Empire in India |
| 29 B.C.E.- 476 C.E. | Roman Empire |
| 324 C.E. | Emperor Constantine moves capital to Constantinople |

| | |
|---|---|
| 1st century C.E. | Spread of Buddhism to SE Asia |
| 100-200 | Buddhism first reaches China |
| 320–499 | Gupta Empire, India |
| 386–534 | Northern Wei in China patronizes Buddhism |
| 400 | Height of Sassanid Dynasty in Persia |
| 565–578 | Justinian's rule of Byzantine Empire |
| 552 | Buddhism arrives in Japan |
| c. 554 | Silkworm eggs smuggled into Byzantine Empire from China |
| 570 – 632 | The Prophet Muhammad |
| 581–618 | Sui Dynasty, China |
| 581–604 | Reign of Emperor Sui Wen Di , China |
| 604–618 | Reign of Emperor Sui Yang, China |
| 618—906 | T'ang Dynasty, China |
| 622 | Hegira (*hijra*), start of Muslim calendar |
| 661–750 | Umayyad Caliphate |
| 676 | Korea united under the Silla Dynasty |
| 683–1025 | Srivijaya Kingdom, Southeast Asia |
| 742–814 | Reign of Charlemagne, King of the Franks |
| 700–1076 | Kingdom of Ghana, West Africa |
| 794–1186 | Heian Period, Japan |
| 800-1200 | Khmer Kingdom, Cambodia |
| 1113-1150 | Reighn of Suryavarman II, builder of Angkor Wat, Cambodia |

## Dramatic Moment
### Ashoka's Reaction to the Victory over Kalinga

Ashoka, the third ruler of the Mauryan empire in India (322–185 B.C.E.), was not the crown prince, so he had to plot against his brothers to gain the throne. In the ninth year of his reign, in an effort to establish his legitimacy and prove to his people that he was indeed worthy of their admiration and obedience, he invaded the region of Kalinga. This was one of the few remaining areas of India still independent of Mauryan rule. After fierce fighting, Ashoka's forces defeated Kalinga. He now ruled almost the entire subcontinent. But instead of rejoicing at his victory, he had a very different reaction. This is the way he described it in a stone inscription:

> Eight years after his coronation King Ashoka conquered Kalinga. In that conquest one hundred and fifty thousand people were deported as prisoners, one hundred thousand were killed or maimed and many times that number died. Immediately after the Kalingas and Brahamins had been conquered, King Ashoka, the Beloved of the Gods, felt remorse. For when an unsubdued country is conquered there occur such things as slaughter, death, and deportation of people and this caused the King to feel profound sorrow and regret. Brahamins and ascetics, as well as householders who all practice such virtues as support of mother and father, service of elders, proper treatment of friends, relatives, acquaintances and kinsmen and slaves and servants, all suffer from the separation from loved ones and the slaughter and deportation of loved ones . . . Even those who escaped calamity themselves are deeply afflicted when their friends, acquaintances, companions, and relatives suffer. Thus, all men share in the misfortune, and this weighs on King Ashoka's mind. . . .
>
> Therefore, even if the number of people who were killed or who died or who were carried away in the Kalinga war had been only one-hundredth or one one-thousandth of what it actually was, this would still be considered serious by the King. . . .
>
> King Ashoka, remorseful as he is, reminds even the forest peoples who live in the royal dominions to adopt this way of life and this ideal. He reminds them, however, that he exercises the power to punish the wrongdoers. For King Ashoka desires all beings should be safe, self-restrained, tranquil in thought, and gentle.
>
> King Ashoka considers the victory of morality as the greatest. He has achieved this victory even to where the Greek King Antiochus rules, and beyond in the dominions of the four kings called Ptolemy, Antigonas, Magus, and Alexander, downwards into the dominions of the Cholas and Pandyas and as far as Ceylon. . . .
>
> This edict . . . has been written that my sons and great grandsons should cease to think of, and in all the victories they may gain they should be content with forbearance and slight punishments. For them the true conquest should be that of morality. . . .

Source: "Rock Edict XIII" Adapted from Balkrishna Govind Gokhale, *Asoka Maurya* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1966), 157–58.

## Lesson One
## What Makes People Obey Rulers: The Question of Legitimacy

### A. Objectives

- To understand the concept of political legitimacy, what makes people believe that the ruler has the right to rule and that they should obey his or her commands.

- To identify some of the different reasons for legitimacy such as force, divinity, charisma, heredity, the ballot, or moral backing, and symbols of power such as a crown or other regalia.

### B. Teaching Activities

1. Ask students to review the reasons why people obey their rulers and the various symbols of legitimacy which the class identified in the introductory activities.

2. Review the hypothesis the class made about effective ways to make sure people will obey the ruler's commands. Explain that the class will now examine historic examples of how rulers have demonstrated they had the right to rule.

3. Divide the class into four groups. Ask each group to examine and interpret a selection of sources for evidence of ways leaders establish, maintain, or represent their legitimacy. What are the leaders wearing, holding, or doing that might reflect their power and authority? What titles do they have? What seems to be the ruler's relationship to people around him or her? What kinds of power do the various symbols suggest? How do rulers represent themselves as having divine power?

### C. Historical Background Information

The great German sociologist Max Weber (1859–1920) defined authority as "the probability that a given command will be obeyed by most people in the group." People are more likely to obey the commands of a leader they consider legitimate. A leader is legitimate when the people believe he or she has the right to hold power and issue orders. In explaining how political leaders gain legitimate authority over their followers, Weber identified three types of legitimacy:

**Charismatic authority**: a leader attracts followers because of his magnetic personality, heroic victories, and appeals to such common emotional ties as race, ethnicity, religion, and common culture. Examples of people who exercised this type of authority might be Napoleon, Mao Zedong, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi.

**Traditional authority**: a leader appeals to the way "we have always done things." Examples of this type of legitimacy would include European kingship, Chinese emperorship, or customary leadership of chiefs in smaller-scale societies. Usually rulers who have this type of authority rely on heredity, that is, on their blood relationship to the previous ruler. The eldest son takes command, or the king or emperor selects a son, brother, or other close relative as heir to the throne. In some societies the king's mother, or "queen mother," may have a strong traditional role in choosing the next ruler.

**Rational-Legal authority**: a leader promises to uphold and enforce laws and rules that are public and apply to all people. A leader must carefully follow rules that define his or her role. Such a leader faces the possibility of being removed from office if he or she acts arbitrarily. Modern democracies where elections determine who is selected as leader practice this type of legitimacy.

Weber's discussion can help students identify and understand the specific meanings of legitimacy in historical cases in societies all over the world. Political legitimacy is always culture-specific. Effective leaders must be able to understand and exemplify the deepest values of the society they hope to rule.

Rulers, like teachers, can resort to power and threats of punishment to get their subjects to obey their commands. Though force is an effective way to *gain* control, it is usually an expensive and ineffective way to *maintain* authority. A ruler who must habitually force his or her subjects to obey probably does not have legitimacy.

In establishing his legitimacy, a ruler usually presides at a ritual occasion where he appropriates the symbols of authority and legitimacy, such as a crown, throne, or gavel. When the leader appears in public, he or she almost always wears, holds, or is accompanied by special articles of clothing. Royal robes may be of a particular color, such as purple in Europe monarchies or yellow in China. These colors are reserved exclusively for the leader. Other typical symbols of authority are a crown, a scepter, a sword, a mace, a fly whisk, jewels. People may be required to bow, kowtow, or prostrate themselves before a ruler. They may be obligated to present tribute or a gift. The ruler may always be surrounded by bodyguards or soldiers.

Songs, chants, salutes, and special music, such as "Hail to the Chief" or "God Save the Queen" may also reinforce a ruler's authority. In addition, leaders or governments often identify themselves with older traditions in an effort to enhance their legitimacy. Think how Napoleon called himself the Holy Roman Emperor, Mussolini linked himself to ancient Roman emperors, or American leaders put up classical-style buildings in Washington, D. C. copy to evoke Athenian democracy or Roman repulicanism.

**Group 1—Titles Indicate Legitimate Authority**

**Discussion Questions, Student Handout 1**

1. What type of authority is Augustus exerting to become "ruler for life?"

2. What sources of power and authority do the various titles suggest?

**Group 2—Symbols of Legitimacy**

**Discussion Questions, Student Handouts 2–6**

1. What kinds of authority and legitimacy do these pictures suggest these rulers have?

2. What are the major symbols that confer legitimate authority on Mansa Musa? What might be the significance of the gold nugget?

3. What is the significance of the coronation of Charlemagne? Who is conferring authority on him? What is Justinian's relationship to the church and divine authority?

4. Horns were used to symbolize divinity. What other sources of power does Naram-Sin appear to have? In what ways is this image similar to the image of George Washington crossing the Delaware?

5. What seem to be the most common symbols of a ruler's power?

**Group 3—Seeking Legitimacy by Identification With Earlier Traditions**

**Discussion Questions, Student Handouts 7–9**

1. In what ways is Queen Amanishakheto's image similar to images of rulers in Egypt? What might be the significance of the similarities? In what ways is her image different?

2. Study the images of King Hammurabi before the Sun-god and Darius the Great receiving a dignitary. In what ways are the images similar? Who is Darius being compared to? Why?

3. From your studies of U.S. and world history suggest examples of ways European and American leaders have attempted to enhance their own authority. Draw upon historical examples of rulers who used means such as titles, architecture, or activities to enhance their authority.

**Group 4—The Ruler's Relationship to His or Her Subjects**

**Discussion Questions, Student Handouts 10-11**

1. What attitude is suggested by the way the servants are using their bodies as they approach Emperor Shi Huang Di? What is happening to the Confucian scholars in the bottom left-hand portion of the painting? What is happening to the Confucian classics in the bottom right hand section of the painting. What do these activities suggest about the relative power of the Confucian tradition and Emperor Shi Huang Di?

2. What does this plaque suggest about the relative power of the people depicted on it? What do the relative sizes of the king and the people surrounding him suggest about his power? Two aides are supporting the king. What might that suggest about the ruler's relationship to his counselors? Owing to the tropical disease environment, horses did not survive long in Benin. What is the significance of picturing the king on horseback?

**Summary Questions for All Groups**
**(Use as an Extension Lesson or an Assessment)**

1. Ask students to locate and share an image of a ruler such as an Egyptian pharaoh, a British monarch, a Native American chief, or an American president. What are the symbols of their authority? Compare them with the symbols the class has already identified.

2. Ask students to identify symbols of authority used by people they know such as a teacher, principal, scout leader, clergyman, mayor, or governor. In what ways are these symbols similar to or different from the symbols they have identified for rulers.

3. Look through an art book to find images of rulers. Determine the most common ways rulers illustrate their authority.

## Titles Indicate Legitimate Authority

The whole body of citizens with a sudden unanimous impulse proffered him the title "father of his country"—first the plebs [common people] by a deputation sent to Antium, and then, because he declined it, again at Rome as he entered the theater, which they attended in throngs, all wearing laurel wreaths; the senate afterwards in the senate house, not by a decree or by acclamation, but through Valerius Messala. He, speaking for the whole body, said: "Good fortune and divine favor attend thee and thy house, Caesar Augustus; for thus we feel that we are praying for lasting prosperity for our country and happiness for our city. The senate in accord with the Roman people hails thee "Father of thy Country." Then Augustus with tears in his eyes replied as follows . . . Having attained my highest hopes, members of the senate, what more have I to ask of the immortal gods than that I may retain this same unanimous approval of yours to the very end of my life?

—Source: Suetonius, *Life of Augustus*, in Merry E. Wiesner, Julius R. Ruff and William Bruce Wheeler, *Discovering the Western Past: A Look at the Evidence*, 2nd ed., vol. one: to 1789 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1993), 53.

In this way the power of both people and senate passed entirely into the hands of Augustus, and from this time there was, strictly speaking, a monarch; for monarchy would be the truest name for it . . . Now, the Romans so detested the title "monarch" that they called their emperors neither dictators nor kings nor anything of this sort . . . The title imperator is held by them for life, not only by those who have won victories in battle but also by all the rest, to indicate their absolute power . . . to make levies, collect funds, declare war, make peace and rule foreigners and citizens alike everywhere and always.

—Source: Dio Cassius, *Roman History*, in Wiesner, et. al., 53–54.

The Institute de France had proposed giving me the title of "Augustus" or "Germanicus." Augustus has only won the Battle of Actium. Germanicus could only interest the Romans by his defeats, for, throughout his life he only distinguished himself by deeds of second-rate importance. Nothing is known of the lives of the Roman Emperors which could make one envy them. . . The only man, who was once Emperor, and who distinguished himself by his character, and his numerous famous acts, was Caesar. If there were a title that I could wish for, it would be that of "Caesar." But so many petty princes have dishonored - and it can be dishonored - this title in such a way that it has nothing in common with the name of the great Caesar. My title is "Emperor of the French."

—Source: *Memoirs of Napoleon*, compiled by F. M. Kircheisen, trans. by Frederick Collins (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1929). Quoted in Daniel D. McGarry and Clarence L. Hohl Jr., *Sources of Western Tradition*, vol. 2 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1963), 249.

Formal or informal titles reflect a ruler's authority. These include:

- King, Queen
- President, Father of the Country
- Son of Heaven (China)
- Sun King (France)
- Pharaoh, or "Man in the Big House" (Egypt)
- Pontifix maximus, supreme priest (Rome)
- Caesar (Rome)
- Tsar or Czar (Russia)
- Cakkavattin, or "One Who Turns the Wheel of Dharma" (India)
- Shogun, Great General (Japan)
- Sultan, The Shadow of God (Muslim lands)

## KING NARAM-SIN OF AKKAD

Giraudon/Art Resource, New York

King Naram-Sin of Akkad in horned tiara near mountain summit with soldiers. Sandstone stele, 2230 B.C.E. The king's horned helmet symbolizes divine power. He is leading his army and trampling on enemies while some prisoners beg for mercy. The scene reproduces, or may have been the model for, scenes of mythological combat between the gods.



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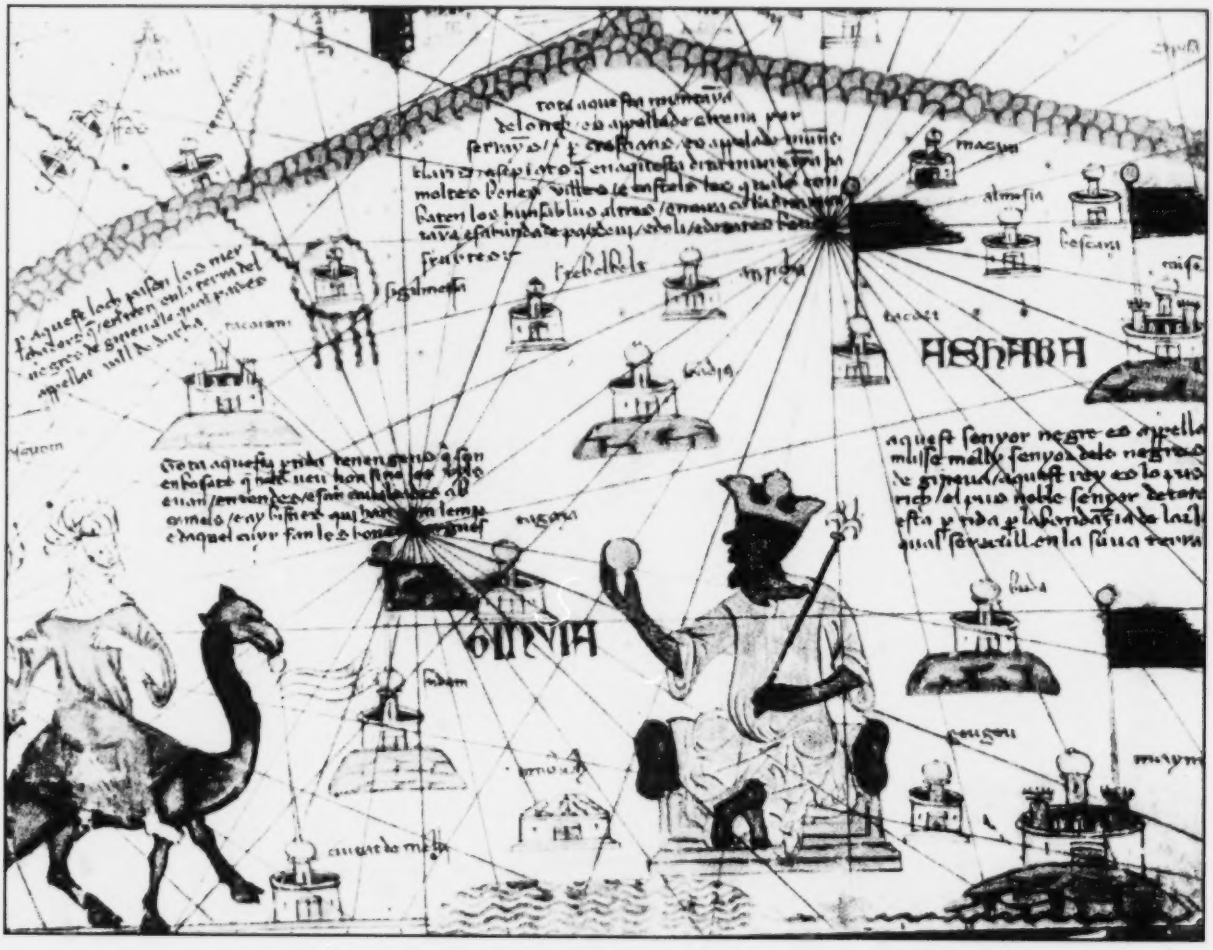
## MANSA MUSA



Giraudon/Art Resource, New York

Mansa Musa (Sultan, or King Musa) of Mali depicted in the Catalan Map of 1375. Mansa Musa holds a crown, scepter, and orb of gold.

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## Coronation of Charlemagne



History of the Emperors: Coronation of Charlemagne. Paris, Bibliotheque de l'Aresenal. Scala/Art Resources, New York





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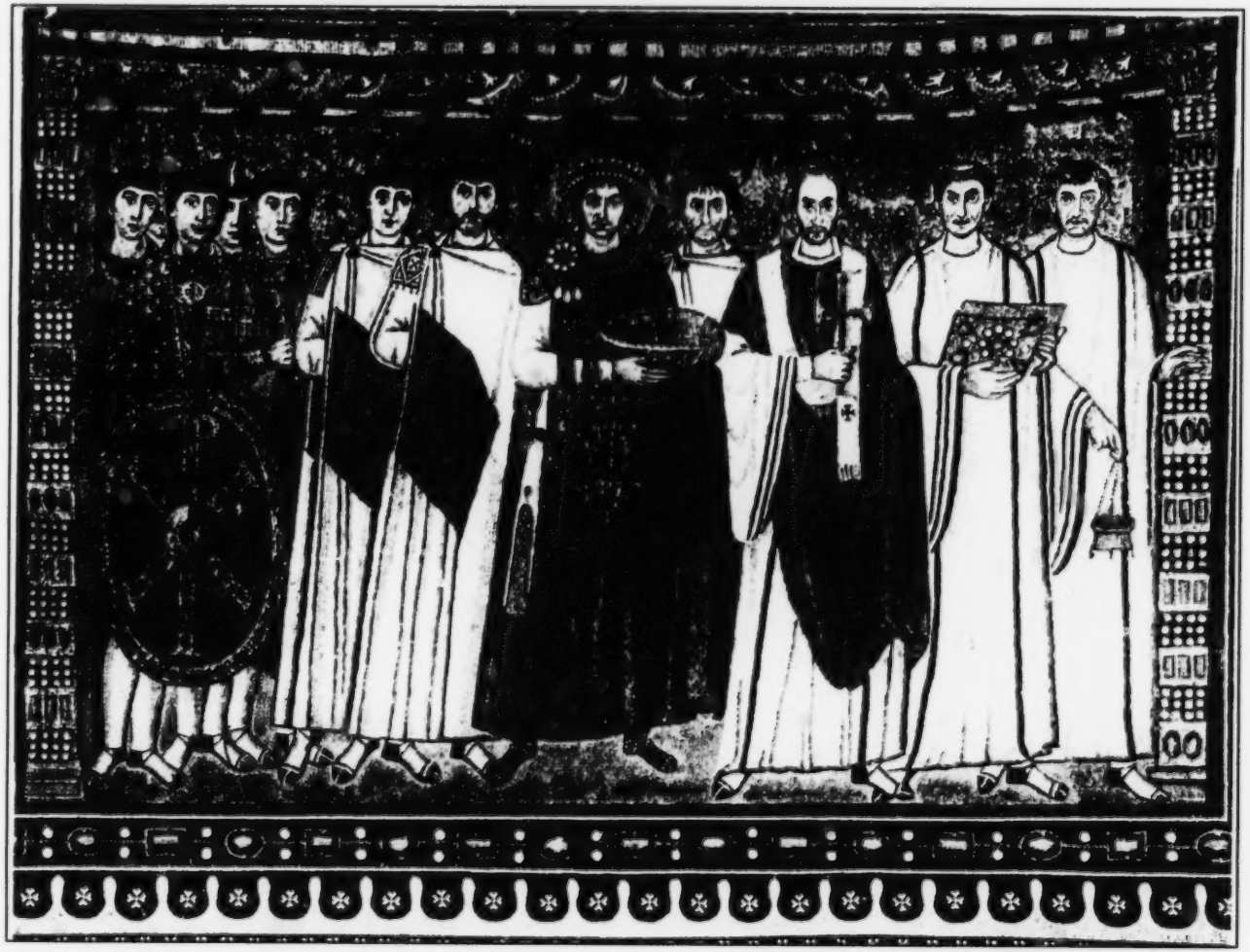
## EMPEROR JUSTINIAN AND HIS COURT



Alinaru / Art Resource, New York

The Emperor Justinian and his court. Church of San Vitale, Ravenna, Italy. Justinian stands with both churchmen and officials during communion service.

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# General George Washington Crossing the Delaware

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of John Stuart Kennedy, 1897. (97.34). Used by permission.

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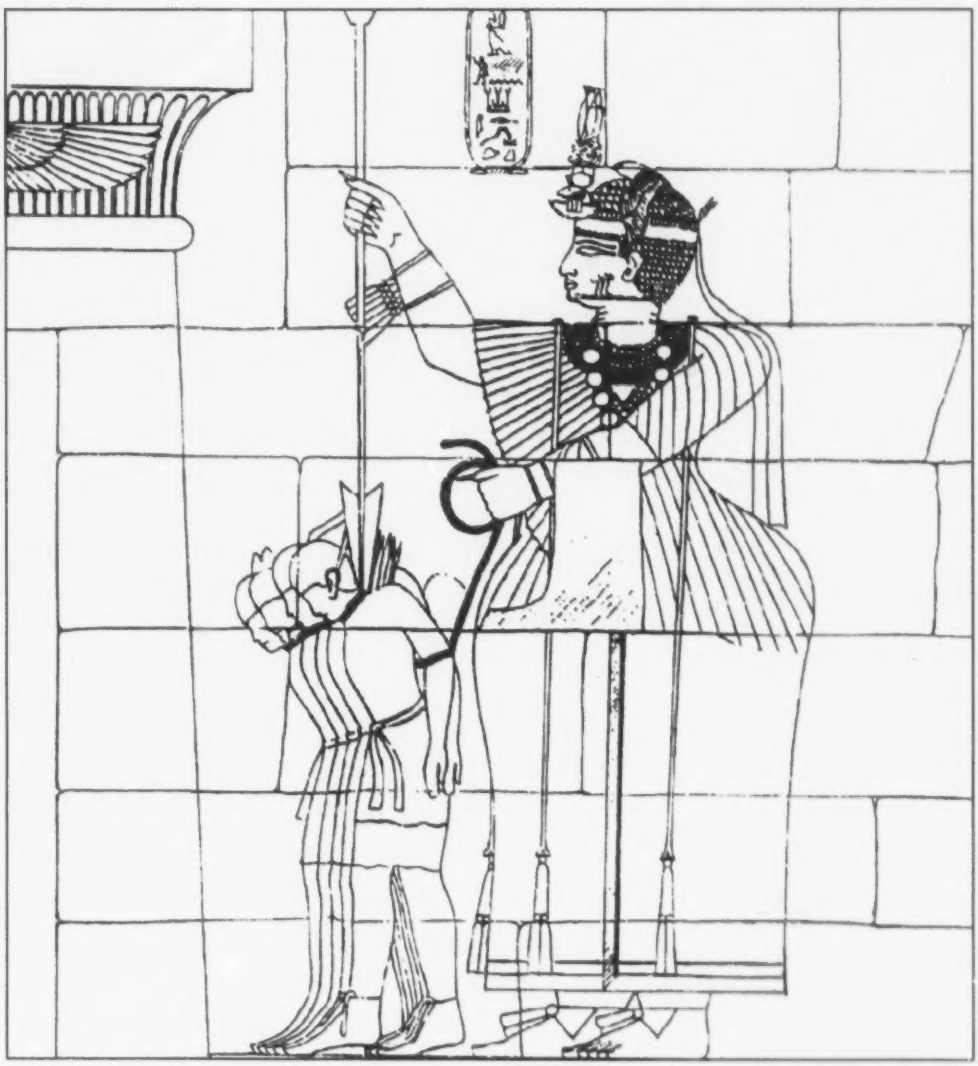
## QUEEN AMANISHAKHETO



Adapted from C. R. Lepsius, *Denkmaeler ous Aegypten und Aethiopien*. Berlin, 1849–59, PartV, Sheet 40.

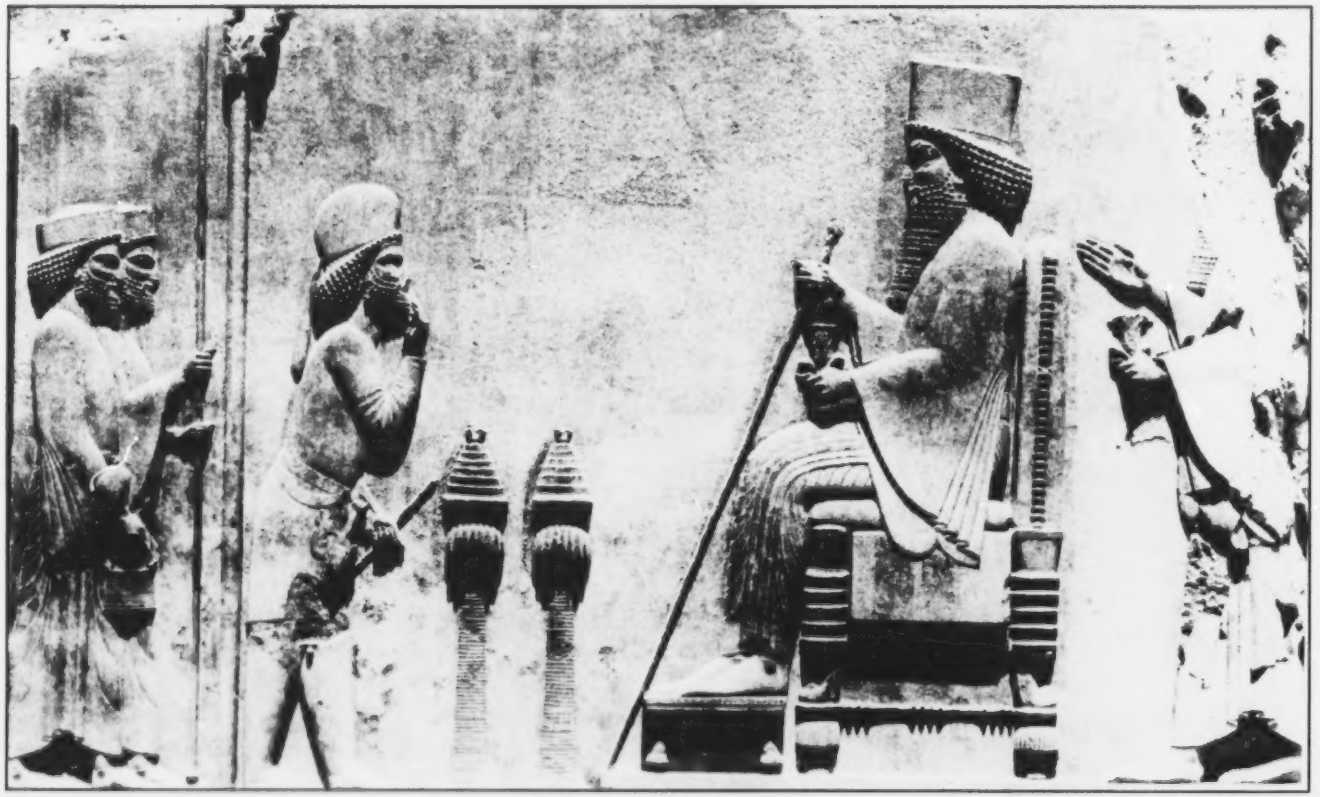
Queen Amanishakheto, Meroe, Kingdom of Kush, Nubia. Later first century B.C.E.
Drawing from an engraving carved on a pylon.

# The Code of Hammurabi

Erich Lessing, Art Resources, New York

The Code of Hammurabi, 262 Laws.
Hammurabi standing before the Sun-god Shamash.
Detail of engraved black stele, first half of eighteenth century B.C.E.

## DARIUS THE GREAT



Giraudon/Art Resource, New York

Median dignitaries rendering homage to Darius the Great (521-486 B.C.E.), Achaemenid Dynasty.

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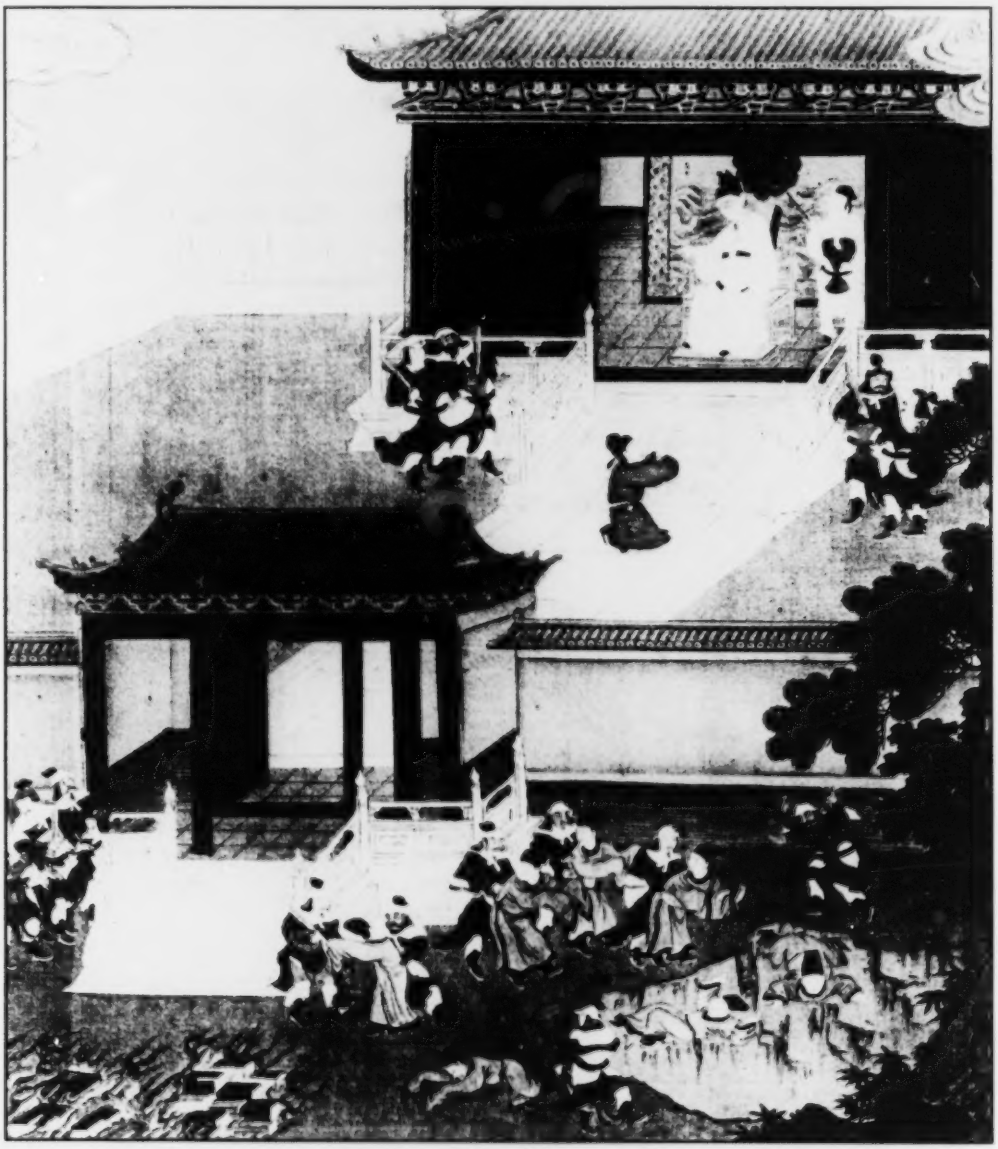
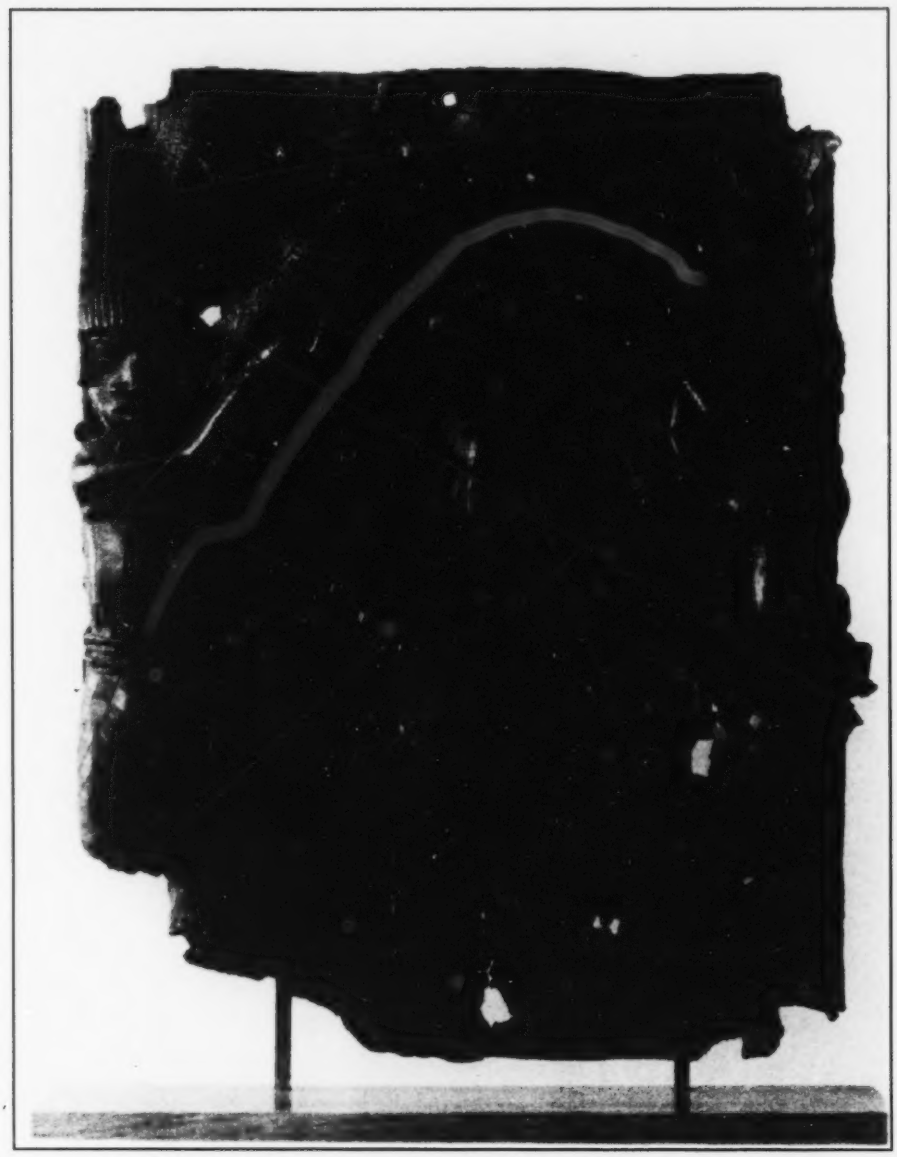
# Shi Huang Di



17th century silk painting. Bibliothequé Nationale, Paris

Shi Huang Di, the "First Emperor" of the Qin Dynasty in China, 220-206 B.C.E. A servant kowtows before the emperor as other servants burn classical Confucian books and bury Confucian scholars alive.

# An Oba ( King) of Benin



The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection.
Gift of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1965. (1978.418.309). Used by permission.

Bronze plaque depicting a king (oba) of Benin mounted on a horse and accompanied by attendants. Kingdom of Benin, West Africa, sixteenth-seventeenth centuries. Static, frontal images symbolized power in Benin art

## Lesson Two
## The Early Mauyran Empire's Basis of Rule and Legitimacy

### A. Objectives

- To understand the concept of rule by physical force and realpolitik, and its relationship to political legitimacy.
- To examine strategies for survival and state-building used by the early leader of the Mauryan empire in India.
- To analyze strategies relatively weak states may use to survive.

### B. Historical Background Information

People of the region extending from the Mediterranean Sea to northern India had much experience with invaders and state-builders. Because of the absence of natural barriers such as mountains to protect them, the farming peoples of Mesopotamia were particularly vulnerable to invasion by nomadic bands from surrounding steppes and deserts. Babylonian, Assryian, Chaldean, Hebrew, and Medean conquerors all created power bases and established kingdoms in West Asia. In the sixth century B.C.E. Cyrus, founder of the Achaemenid dynasty in Persia, united a mixture of peoples under an imperial system that at its height extended from Egypt to Afghanistan.

In the fourth century Alexander of Macedonia, whose father Philip II had founded a Greco-Macedonian kingdom, invaded West Asia and overthrew the Achaemenids. Alexander defeated Emperor Darius III in 330 B.C.E. and claimed the lands under Persian rule. He also adopted many of symbols and institutions of Persian kingship, including dress, manners, displays of royal regalia, and insistence that he be treated as a "god." Like both Cyrus and Darius, Alexander expected absolute and unquestioned obedience.

Crossing northern Persia and Afghanistan, Alexander invaded northern India in 326 B.C.E. and defeated the Indian king Porus. Because his exhausted soldiers were on the verge of mutiny, Alexander withdrew from India and returned to Mesopotamia, where he died in 323. Meanwhile, Chandragupta, the ruler of the Indian state of Magadha, took advantage of the Macedonia army's withdrawal to establish the Mauryan empire, which included most of the lands of the Indus and Ganges plains. The Mauryan state flourished from 322 to 185 B.C.E. *Megasthenes*, a Greek envoy to the Mauryan court, reported that Chandragupta, like his Greek-speaking contemporaries to the west, ruled primarily by force. He financed a professional army from the spoils of war and organized a network of roads and royal spies in order to move his troops quickly and to stay informed about all parts of his kingdom.

Chandragupta Maurya based much of his political philosophy and foreign policy on the *Arthasastra*, a treatise on government written by Kautilya, the king's chief advisor. Kautilya, a proponent of realpolitik government, hoped that his advice would make the Mauryan empire secure. According to the *Arthasastra*, relations among states follow the "Law of the Fishes:" big fish (empires) eat little fish (kingdoms). How, Kautilya examined, can a prince of a small kingdom keep from being "eaten up?" How can a big fish keep little fish from uniting and ganging up on him?

Kautilya's political map included twelve concentric circles of states. The state he served was in the center. All states that border the center state are automatically its enemies. But the states that border them on the outside become friends, because they are enemies of one's enemies. But if one's own state were to absorb the first ring of enemies, then the friends in the next ring become enemies. Enemies in the ring after that become friends. It follows that there are no lasting relationships among states, only temporary alliances. In this amoral world of fishes devouring one another, right action is whatever helps a ruler maintain his power. Continued legitimacy is based on the ability to stay on top of one's enemies. Kautilya's view of power relations could be expressed in the form of a *mandala* diagram. The Indian term *mandala* refers to a design based on geometric forms.

## C. Teaching Activities

1. Share the **Historical Background Information** with the students as a lecture or a reading handout.

   Discuss: What was the basis of Chandragupta's political authority? How did he aim to achieve and hold on to legitimacy? What probably made people in the empire obey him?

2. Have students examine the concentric circles of the Mandala strategy (**Student Handout 12**) as described by Kautilya. Applying the Mandala principle, discuss how contemporary nations might react to neighboring states. For example, consider Canada's view of the United States, France's view of Germany, India's view of Pakistan, or Russia's view of China. In the nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan in 1998, what principles of the *Arthasastra* were both nations and China following? Cite examples from history that illustrate this theory about the shifting nature of political friends and enemies, alliances, and wars.

3. Use **Student Handout 13** to establish the context and share the seven ways Kautilya used to greet a neighbor. Identify United States foreign policy goals and discuss now U.S. leaders might use the "Seven Ways" to achieve these goals. Watch the evening news or consult daily newspapers for applications of one or more of the "Seven Ways" in world or domestic politics.

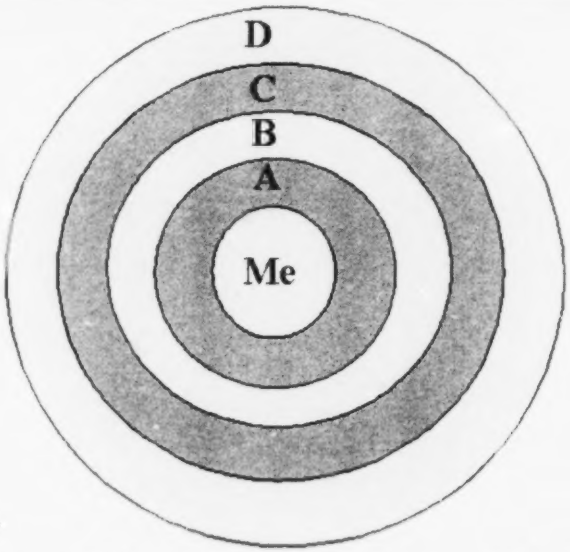
   Discuss: How might you use the "seven ways" to get a teacher to change your grade or a parent to extend your curfew?

4. Artha is the science of survival and getting ahead in the world.

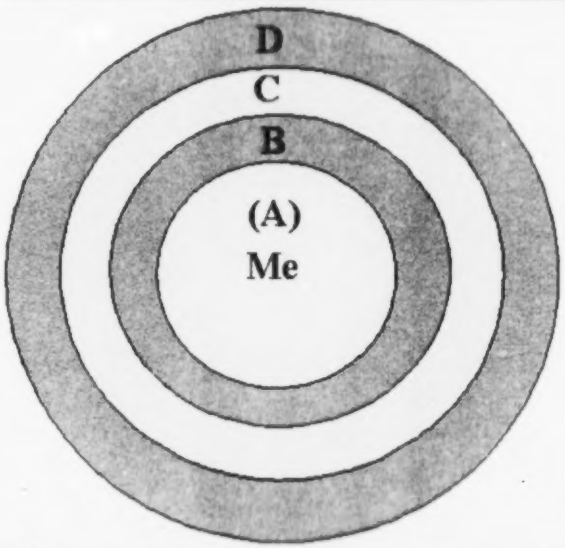
   Discuss **Student Handout 14**:

   How might you use Kautilya's advice to build your own career? How common are these amoral strategies in political and business dealings in the United States? If you pursued artha, what would your general attitude be toward other people? What are viable alternatives to artha if you want to get ahead in the world?

## MANDALA DIAGRAM




**A** is my enemy, **B** is my friend, **C** is my enemy, **D** is my friend.




**A** is absorbed into my circle, so **B** becomes my enemy, **C** becomes my friend, **D** becomes my enemy.

**KEY**

Enemy

Friend

Illustration by Marian McKenna Olivas



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## Seven Ways to Greet a Neighbor

**Small states are almost always under threat from neighboring states in the "world of the fishes." Small states must use various strategies in order to survive. Here are seven strategies that Kautilya recommended to Emperor Chandragupta Maurya in dealing with neighboring kingdoms:**

**Sarnan**: Appeasement, sweet talk, soothing words, conciliatory conduct, such things as non-aggression pacts and treaties.

**Danda**: Exerting power, punishment, violence, being well-armed, carrying a big stick, aggression.

**Dana**: bribery or gift-giving, a donation, an agreement to share the spoils of war.

**Bheda**: Dividing the opposition so as to defeat them, splitting or causing a breach in the opposition, sow dissension in the enemy camp, using treachery or treason.

**Maya**: deceit, illusion, fraud, diplomatic deception (as when a Japanese mission went to Washington, DC in 1941 to offer peace when aircraft carriers were already on their way to Pearl Harbor).

**Upeksa**: taking no notice, over-looking or ignoring the enemy until you have decided on the proper course of action.

**Indraiala**: military maya, creating the appearance of power when you have none, feinting an assault in one direction and attacking in another.

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## ADVICE ON ARTHA

**Advice on artha, or political power given in the Indian epic the Mahabharata, which was composed in Sanskrit between about 200 B.C.E. and 200 C.E.**

- The last word of social wisdom is never trust.

- As clouds change from moment to moment, just so thine enemy of today becomes, even today, they friend.

- Might is above right; right proceeds from might; right has its support in might, as living begins in the soil. As smoke the wind, so right must follow might. Right in itself is devoid of command; it leans on might as the creeper on the tree.

- Right is in the hands of the strong; nothing is impossible to the strong. Everything is pure that comes from the strong.

- When thou findest thyself in a low state, try to lift thyself up, resorting to pious as well as to cruel actions. Before practicing morality, wait until thou art strong.

- Be a heron in calculating thine own advantage, a lion when thou dost attack, a wolf when thou dost prey, a hare when thou takest flight.

- If thou art not prepared to be cruel and to kill men as the fisher kills the fish, abandon every hope of great success.

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## LESSON THREE
## EMPEROR ASHOKA: RULE BY DHAMMA

### A. OBJECTIVES

- To understand Emperor Ashoka's attitude towards war and military might in contrast to that of other rulers of his time.
- To understand what Ashoka meant by *dhamma* and its significance for his political legitimacy.
- To evaluate Ashoka's strategies for ruling a pluralistic empire.

### B. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

By way of preface, teachers should understand that *dharma* is a Sanskrit word meaning ideal performance of the social role into which one is born. Fulfilling that responsibility as an individual is the principle that keeps the universe going. *Dhamma* is variant of *dharma*. It is a word in Pali, a spoken version of the Sanskritic mother tongue. In Buddhism *dhamma* refers to the right path of thought and action. Ashoka used *dhamma* to refer to the virtue of social as well as individual.

The Mauryan Empire (322-184 B.C.E.) was diverse in peoples, languages, and sects. Brahminism was the main religion of the time, but there were also many religious seekers and minor sects. An increasing number of people followed Gautauma (the Buddha) and Mahavira, who founded Jainism. Ashoka, who ruled the Mauryan Empire from 273 to 232 B.C.E., had to find ways to unify these diverse peoples and gain legitimacy in the eyes of all of them. Unlike either his predecessor Chandragupta or the Greek rulers to the west, Ashoka used the social ethic of a religious minority in what appears to have been an attempt to encourage social cohesion.

Most of the information about the historic Ashoka comes from the sixteen rock edicts, three minor rock edicts, and seven pillar edicts which historians believe Ashoka dictated and had carved on commemorative rocks and pillars. These were then distributed throughout his kingdom, in part to demarcate the areas under his far-reaching authority. Indian scholars did not write any official history of Ashoka's rule during his reign or after it. Therefore, historians must build their picture of what kind of ruler he was in large part from his edicts.

Horrified at the carnage the Kalinga war caused Ashoka renounced aggressive warfare (See the **Dramatic Moment**.) Although he did not disband his army, he declared that they were to be used only for defense and further conquests would result from righteousness and goodness. But the empire Ashoka ruled was pluralistic, and his

reign represented the first time the subcontinent had come under any kind of centralized control. Ashoka had to figure out how to keep diverse population of this vast territory willing to obey his commands. Although he converted to Buddhism, he wanted to promote a philosophy that everyone in his empire could accept. His solution was to promote his own practical version of the Buddhist *dhamma*, a concept already central to Buddhist teachings.

As early as the tenth century B.C.E., Indians had developed the concept of the ideal ruler who was called a *chakravartin*. He was a monarch who turned the wheel, or *chakra* of righteousness and moral authority and who ruled the world by his moral authority during the mythical golden age. The symbol of his legitimacy was a great chakra, which appeared in the sky and signified that he was a chakravartin. Poverty, ill-will, violence, and wrongdoing did not exist because the king's purity ensured a peaceful, prosperous, and idyllic existence for all.

Ashoka consciously tried to present himself as a *chakravartin* in order to establish his legitimacy. Having already confirmed his military dominance by seizing the throne from his brothers and by the successful Kalinga campaign, he could now emulate the *chakravartin* of the golden age and promote virtue, compassion, justice, and equity. Concerned with the welfare of his people, he stressed impartiality in both justice and punishment. He also built roads and rest houses, planted trees, and dug wells. He provided hospitals for people and animals, supervise the growing of medical herbs, released prisoners from jail, instructed his ministers to ensure that people be treated fairly, and urged his subjects to bring their concerns to him at any time day or night.

The basis of Ashoka's rule was to be *dhamma*, meaning morality, social responsibility, and a humanistic spirit. It was not to be *danda*, or rule with the rod of power and punishment. If the king was a moral ruler, his subjects would prosper. Ashoka became a Buddhist after the Kalinga campaign. He supported the building of Buddhist worship centers with stupas, or sacred mounds that contained a relic of the Buddha. He also counseled communities of Buddhist monks and convened a Buddhist council. But more importantly, he advocated tolerance of all beliefs. The *dhamma* that he promoted could be followed by people of any faith and he sent out "ministers of righteousness" to spread and enforce *dhamma*.

## C. Teaching Activities

1. **Introductory Questions**

   Reviewing the **Dramatic Moment**, what can you infer from it about Ashoka Maurya's attitude toward war and killing? How does Ashoka's reaction to warfare seem different from that expressed in the teachings of Kautilya or the *Mahabharata*?

2. **Small Group Activity: Determining the important aspects of Ashoka's concept of *dhamma*.**

   Use the **Historical Background Information** as either a lecture or a reading handout to situate Ashoka in his historica place in time. Give each student one of the rock edicts on *dhamma* (**Student Handout 15**). Have each student define in his or her own words Ashoka's idea of *dhamma* based on the information in the edict. Then divide the class into groups of five. Have each student share his or her definition with the other students in the small group. Then ask each small group construct its own definition of *dhamma*. Finally, share the definitions from of each group. Ask the class to decide on what Ashoka meant by *dhamma*.

3. **Discussion questions: Ashoka's *dhamma***

   a. In what ways does *dhamma* reflect Buddhist principles? Help students review the Four Noble Truths and the Eight Fold Path of the Buddha. Also review the Buddha's idea of karuna, or compassion. Remind them that the Buddha taught, "Do as little harm as possible." Then compare Ashoka's *dhamma* with the Buddha's teachings. What aspects of *dhamma* seem to reflect Buddhist beliefs? Would a person have to be a Buddhist to practice *dhamma*? What might Brahmins say about *dhamma*? What might Jains say?

   b. Discuss with students whether they could practice Ashoka's *dhamma* without violating their own personal beliefs. That is, could they follow *dhamma* and still be good Jews, Muslims, or Christians? How might encouraging people to practice *dhamma* have helped unify the diverse peoples in the Mauyran kingdom? How might American society be different if people practiced Ashokan *dhamma*?

4. **Ashoka as a political *chakravartin*, or moral ruler**

Review with students the Rock Edicts that refer to Ashoka's strategy for leadership. Then, discuss the following questions with the class:

a. *Danda* is the Hindu word for physical force or power, one of the ways rulers tried to survive in the amoral " world of the fishes." What did Ashoka use in place of *danda* to control his people? How did he maintain his strong centralized control and his legitimacy in the eyes of his people?

b. What strategies did Ashoka use to unite his diverse kingdom and promote social responsibility? What were the strengths and weaknesses to his approach to power and legitimacy?

c. Why might people be willing to obey him? Who might want to revolt? To what extent might Ashoka's edicts have reflected what he hoped would happen rather than what was actually going on? If these edicts did reflect what was happening in the Mauryan Empire, should Ashoka be considered a moral ruler, that is, a *chakravartin*?

d. What might a leader who wished to follow Ashoka's approach to leadership do about such issues as use of military or police violence, forced labor, tax collecting, or public works projects?

# Rock Edicts

The quoted text below has been modified for consistent use of the terms. "King Ashoka" or "Beloved of the Gods" refers to Ashoka.

**From Rock Edict III**

Twelve years after my coronation I have ordered thus! Everywhere in my dominions, the officers will embark on tours of inspection every five years in order to instruct people in the *Dhamma* as well as for other purposes.

They will instruct my subjects that obedience to father and mother is excellent; liberality to friends, acquaintances and kinsmen, to Brahmins and ascetics is excellent; excellent is abstention from the slaughter of animals; and it is good not only to spend little, but to own few possessions.

**From Rock Edict IV**

. . . [*Dhamma* is identified as] non-slaughter of animals for sacrificial purposes. Non-violence toward human beings, proper attention to kinsmen, proper attention to Brahmins and ascetics, welfare of mother and father, welfare of the aged and many other kinds of moral behavior; all these have increased. They will increase further.

**From Rock Edict IX**

People practice many and diverse ceremonies. In sickness, or marriage of sons and daughters, or for the gift of a son, or for safety in journey in these and other matters, people perform diverse propitious ceremonies. And in this wives and mothers particularly indulge in ceremonies that are useless and empty. The ceremony of Dharma on the contrary, is very fruitful. It comprises proper treatment of slaves and servants, respect toward teachers, restraints toward living creatures, gifts to Brahmins and ascetics, these and many such others are the ceremonies of *Dhamma*.



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## Rock Edicts that Describe Ashoka's Strategy for Leadership

**From Rock Edict II**

> Everywhere in the empire, and even in the lands on its frontiers, and as faras Ceylon, and of the Greek king named Antiochus, and of those kings who are his neighbors, everywhere King Ashoka has arranged for two kinds treatments, of men and animals. And those medical herbs that are beneficial to men and animals have been brought and planted wherever they did not exist. Roots and fruits too have been brought and planted wherever they did not exist. On the highway, wells have been dug, and trees planted for the use of men and animals.

**From Pillar Edict IV**

> . . . I have given my ministers independent authority in judgment and punishment. But it is desirable that there should be uniformity in judicial procedure and punishment.
>
> This is my instruction from now on: Men who are imprisoned and sentenced to death are to be given three days respite. Thus their relations may plead for their lives, or. If there is no one to plead for them, they may make donations and undertake a fast for a better rebirth in the next life.

**From 1st Separate Rock Edict**

> All men are my children. Just as I desire that my children will fare well and be happy in this world and the next, I desire the same things for all men.

**From Rock Edict V**

> Since I have been crowned 13 years, I have appointed officers of *dhamma* . . . They are employed among the servants and masters, among Brahmins, the destitute and the aged, for their benefit and happiness. The officers are busy promoting the welfare of prisoners, in preventing harassment and securing release for those who have children, or who have been overwhelmed with calamity or are old. Here in Pataliputra or elsewhere they are employed in all towns . . .

Source: Balkrishna Govind Gokhale, *Asoka Maurya* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1966), 152–59.



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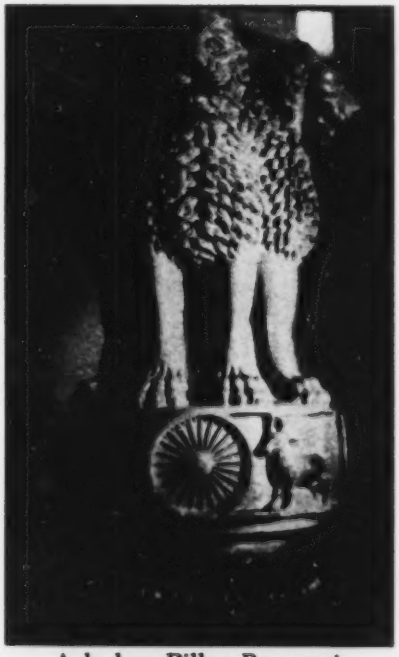
**From Rock Edict XII**

King Ashoka honors men of all faiths, and both ascetics and laymen, with gifts and various forms of recognition. But the Beloved of the Gods does not consider gifts or honors to be as important as the advancement of the essential doctrine of all sects. This progress of the essential doctrine takes many forms, but its basis is the control of one's speech, so as not to extol one's own sect or disparage another's on unsuitable occasions, or at least to do so only mildly on certain occasions. On each occasion one should honor another man's sect, for by doing so one increases the influence of one's own sect and benefits that of the other man: while by doing other wise one diminishes the influence of one's own sect and harms the other man's.

Again, whosoever honors his own sect or disparages that of another man, wholly out of devotion to his own, with a view to showing it in a favorable light, harms his own sect even more seriously. Therefore concord is to be commended, so that men may hear one another's principles and obey them. This is the desire of the Beloved of the Gods, that all sects should be well-informed, and should teach that which is good . . .

Source: Adapted from Romila Thapar, *Asoka and the Decline of the Mauryas* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 255



**Ashokan Pillar, Baranasi**
Photo by Donald James Johnson

## Lesson Four
## The Legendary Ashoka

### A. Objectives

- To examine the legends about Ashoka that emerged after his death.
- To examine why the legendary Ashoka ordered the distribution of relics and the building of stupas.
- To analyze why or why not other leaders might want to follow the example of the legendary Ashoka.
- To distinguish between and evaluate different types of historical evidence.

### B. Historical Background Information

As knowledge of the Brahmi script in which Ashoka's edicts were written was forgotten, people had to rely on the oral tradition for information about Ashoka. Legends about Ashoka began to circulate very soon after his death, and the legends can be found in Sanskrit, Pali, Chinese, Tibetan, Japanese, Burmese, Thai, Sinhalese, and other Asian languages. One of the most influential texts, and perhaps the basic Sanskrit version of the Ashokan legend, is the *Asokavadana*. It was originally part of a Sanskrit anthology of Buddhist legends. It was probably written down in the second century C.E. (more than 300 years after Ashoka's death), although the legends themselves are much earlier. The *Asokavadana* was very probably written at Mathura, an important center of the Buddhist Sanskrit tradition.

In the early sections of the *Asokavadana*, Ashoka is portrayed as a traditional warrior king who disposed of the legitimate heir so he could have the throne. He ruled by power and lived for pleasure. His subjects thought of him as Ashoka-the-Fierce because he was so malicious, oppressing the people and even building a prison where he randomly had captives tortured and killed. One day, when he went to watch the tortures, he saw a prisoner who didn't seem to notice what was being done to him. As a result, so the legend goes, Ashoka converted to Buddhism.

To commemorate his conversion, Ashoka decided to consecrate and redistribute Buddhist relics in 84,000 stupas around his kingdom. The relics first had to be collected from eight ancient stupas, known as *drona* stupas because each contained a bucket, or *drona* with a relic in it. Then the relics had to be redistributed throughout his kingdom. Ashoka collected them from all but the eighth stupa, which was in the naga, or snake palace. Realizing the *nagas'* devotion to the Buddha, he left their stupa undisturbed. After convincing the people of Taksasila that they should only get one relic box, he

commissioned the construction of 84,000 stupas, boxes, urns, and inscription plates. This act marks the moment when Ashoka changed from Ashoka-the-fierce to Dharma-Ashoka, one who sets a moral example. So the building of the stupas and distribution of the relics was for the legendary Ashoka what the war against Kalinga was for the Ashoka-of-the-edicts.

The stupa, a hemispheric solid mound of dirt or rubble, was probably originally a burial mound. Ancient burial mounds were common in India long before the Buddha and can be found all over Asia. Gradually the shape and function of these mounds became part of Buddhist architecture. Stories circulated that the Buddha establishing the three tiers of the stupa—a square base, a hemisphere and a pentacle (regular, five-pointed star-shaped figure)—by folding his begging cloth, placing his begging bowl on it, and crowning the top with a stick. At first the mound-turned-stupa was associated with the Buddha's death and liberation from rebirth. By Ashoka's lifetime it had come to symbolize not only a reliquary and memorial but the body and teachings of the Buddha. Stupas reminded people of the Buddha's teachings and encouraged people on their own spiritual journeys. By walking around a stupa, people made a symbolic journey to enlightenment. Eventually it would become the primary religious emblem in Buddhist Asia, symbolizing the cosmic mountain, the navel of the universe, the generative womb, and an ascending pathway leading to Buddhist liberation.

When a Buddhist image is consecrated, it comes alive. The Buddha is thought to be present in it. In a sense this act recreates the Buddha's bodily form. By building the stupas, distributing the relics, and commanding that all 84,000 stupas be completed and consecrated at exactly the same moment, Ashoka was symbolically reconstructing the body of the Buddha, whose empire became identified symbolically with Ashoka's kingdom. Moreover, 84,000 also represents the number of sections in the Buddha's teachings. So Ashoka was also reconstructing the Buddha's teaching and through this act, establishing himself as the *dhamma* king (*dhammaraja*). "The legend that Ashoka redistributed the Buddha's relics in 84,000 stupas throughout India, each located in a political division of his domain, suggests that Ashoka governed his realm through a ritual hegemony rather than actual political control."

## C. Teaching Activities

1. Use the **Historical Background Information** to give students familiarity with the legendary Ashoka. Then read the excerpt from the *Asokavadana*, **Student Handout 16**, with the class.

   **Discussion Questions:**

   a. How does Ashoka treat the *nagas*? What does that suggest about the continuing power of *naga* worship in India?

b. How does Ashoka respond to the request by the people of Taksasila for thirty-six boxes of relics? What does that suggest about Ashoka's leadership skills?

c. Was it possible to consecrate all 84,000 stupas at the same time? Why was it important to suggest that Ashoka could consecrate all 84,000 stupas at the same time?

d. Why does Ashoka insist that the stupas be built all over his kingdom? How might this help unify his kingdom? What is Ashoka trying to symbolize for the people of his kingdom? How does he hope they will respond to his rituals?

e. What aspects of stories that circulated about Ashoka suggest that he was "less than perfect?" How did Ashoka and the way he ruled change after he ordered the building of the stupas and distribution of the relics? What was the source of his legitimacy in his early years? In distributing the relics, what kind of legitimacy might the legendary Ashoka have been relying on?

f. The story of the legendary Ashoka suggests that effective government rests on far more than military force alone. The legendary Ashoka, by identifying himself with the Buddha's teaching and ritually building a state that is like the Buddha's teachings and the body of the Buddha, would have established his legitimacy as a moral leader. How did the legendary Ashoka identify himself with the Buddha's teaching? How did he create a state that was like the Buddha's teachings and the body of the Buddha?

g. How much credibility should we give to the stories told about Ashoka as opposed to the evidence about him inscribed on the rocks and pillars? Does the Rock Edict evidence have more "truth value" regarding Ashoka than the legends that sprang up after his death? Why or why not?

2. Make a handout or transparency of the illustration of the stupa in this unit. Examine the appearance of a stupa with the class. Then discuss the stupa's meaning and significance.

3. Have students look for images of stupas in art or history books and share them with the class. Compare the form and function of a stupa with the form and function of a church or a mosque.

## THE 84,000 STUPAS

Then King Asoka, intending to distribute far and wide the bodily relics of the Blessed One [the Buddha], went together with a fourfold army to the drona stupa that Ajatasatru had built. He broke it open, took out all the relics, and putting back a portion of them, set up a new stupa. He did the same with the second drona stupa and so on up to the seventh one, removing the relics from each of them and then setting up new stupas as tokens of his devotion. Then he proceeded to Ramagrama. There the nagas took him down to the naga palace and told him: "We here pay homage to our drona stupa." Asoka, therefore, let them keep their relics intact, and the naga king himself escorted him back up from the palace.

Indeed, as it is said,

Today in Ramagama the eighth stupa stands
for in those days the nagas guarded it with devotion.
The king did not take the relics from there
but left them alone and, full of faith, withdrew.

Then Asoka had 84,000 boxes made of gold, silver, cat's eye, and crystal, and them were placed the relics. Also, 84,000 urns and eighty-four thousand inscription plates were prepared. All of this was given to the yaksas for distribution in the [eighty-four thousand] dharmarajikas [stupas] he ordered built throughout the earth as far as the surrounding ocean, in the small, great, and middle-sized towns, wherever there was a [population of] one hundred thousand [persons].

Now in those days, in the city of Taksasila, there were thirty-six hundred thousand [people]; they therefore requested thirty-six boxes of relics. Asoka realized he could not agree to this if the relics were to be distributed far and wide. He was, however, a master of clever means; he announced that [since he could not give the Taksasilans more than one share of the relics], he would have to have thirty-five hundred thousand of them executed. [They quickly withdrew their demand.] Later Asoka formally proclaimed that no additional relics were to be given where there were more than one hundred thousand [people], and none at all where there were fewer than that.

Asoka then went to the Kukkutarama Monastery and spoke to the elder Yasas: "This is my wish; I would like to complete the building of all eighty-four thousand dharmarajikas on the same day at the same time." "Very well," replied the elder, "when the moment comes, I shall signal it by hiding the orb of the sun with my hand." Then, not long thereafter, he eclipsed the sun with his hand, and all at once the eighty-four thousand dharmarajikas were completed.

And it is said:

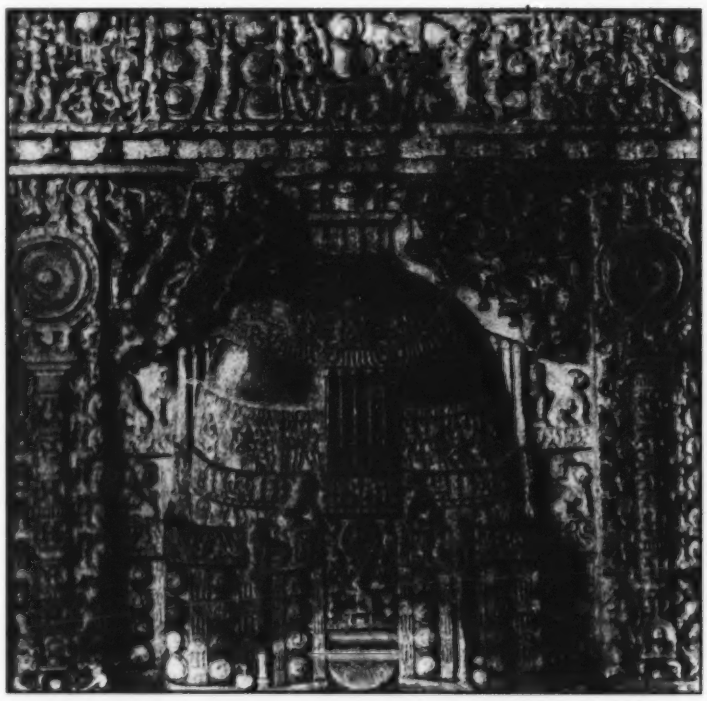
From those seven reliquaries fold
the Mauryan took away the relics of the Sage,
and built on this earth in one day
eighty-four thousand stupas,
resplendent as the autumn clouds.

Now when King Asoka had completed the eighty-four thousand dharmarajika, he became a righteous dharmaraja, [dharma king] and therefore was known as "dharmasoka."

As it is said:

For the benefit of beings throughout the world
the noble Maurya built stupas.
He had been known as "Asoka the Fierce;"
by this act he became "Asoka the Righteous."

Source: John S. Strong, "The 84,000 Stupas," in *The Legend of King Ashoka: A Study and Translation of the Asokavadana*, 219-221. Copyright 1983 by Princeton University Press. Reprinted by permission of Princeton University Press



Relief showing a stupa, Amararati.
Courtesy of the Government of India Tourist Office. 19 East 49th St., NewYork 17, NY.

## STUPA

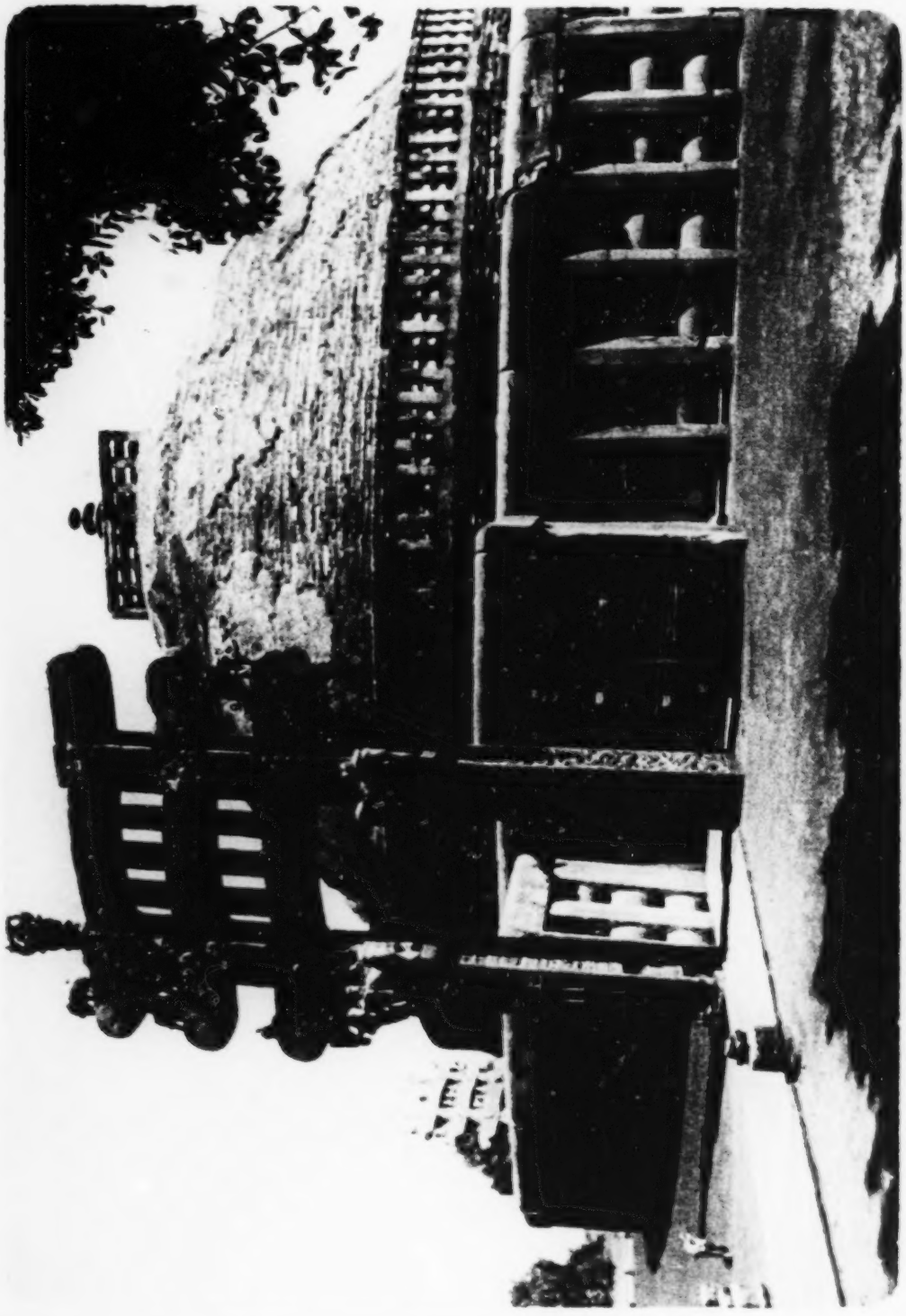


Photo by Jean E. Johnson

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## Lesson Five
## Ashoka's Influence Spreads to East and Southeast Asia

### A. Objectives

- To review the process of cultural diffusion to understand why people are attracted to foreign ideas and how they might adapt them.
- To analyze cultural beliefs and practices found in Southeast Asia, such as the ritual authority of local leaders, the idea of sacred mountains, and reverence for nagas.
- To examine why people in Southeast Asia and China found Hindu and Buddhist ideas that came from India appealing.
- To analyze how local leaders in Southeast Asia and China appropriated Indian ideas, especially the Ashokan ideal of ritual authority rather than military might.
- To investigate the meaning of the "theater state" and compare it as a type of legitimacy with legitimacy based on military might.
- To analyze how the emperor of the Sui Dynasty in China used the Ashokan example to unify his state.
- To understand how leaders may use architecture to express their legitimacy.

### B. Historical Background Information

This lesson asks students to consider how local rulers and would-be rulers in Southeast Asia and China adapted aspects of the Ashokan model to enhance their power and legitimacy. As scholars began to translate Buddhist texts into Chinese, Tibetan, Japanese, Burmese, and Thai, the legendary Ashoka played a very important role in the spread of Buddhism to both Southeast and East Asia. According to an authority on Buddhism in Southeast Asia, Ashoka was the exemplar par excellence, who provided a universal model whom any ruler should strive to emulate.In Southeast Asia petty leaders who wanted to increase their authority over larger and larger areas even though they did not have big armies found the Ashokan model useful. In China, the first Sui emperor (581–618) had a strong army, which he used to gain control of the country after three hundred years of political fragmentation. However, he sought ways other than military coercion to unite his people. Though Ashoka Maurya had lived more than 800 years before the founding of the Sui Dynasty, stories about his paternalism and concern for the welfare of his subjects traveled to Southeast and East Asia with traders, envoys, monks, and missionaries. So did his model of legitimacy based on ritual authority and moral leadership.

From very early times in Southeast Asia, people who wanted to have authority over others had to have ritual, magical, even supernatural power. A local chief's authority grew because he possessed a spiritual essence that transformed him from a petty leader into a "man of prowess." Ancient kings of Java claimed to be able to call upon the gods to bring fertility to the soil as well as to conquer their enemies. A local chief became a "big man" if his magical powers ensured a sufficient supply of water for the crops.

In many areas of Southeast Asia, people believed mountains were the abode of spiritual forces, including ancestral spirits who were responsible for the prosperity of the living. Funan, the first kingdom in mainland Southeast Asia, was associated with the mountains. Mountains were important symbols in pre-Buddhist Java. The Javanese, believing supernatural power hovered around mountain peeks, built numerous sanctuaries in high places. Would-be rulers had to be associated with the divinities and ancestral spirits that inhabited the sacred mountains. Rulers had to appear to "control the sun and rain" so that crops would crop and people would thrive.

Since the ideal of Ashoka was a ruler who exhibited ritual authority rather than military might, both the legendary Ashokan model of ritual authority and other aspects of Hindu and Buddhist belief were very appealing in Southeast Asia. Local reverence for the *naga*, or dragon/snake, fit with Ashoka's attitude toward the *nagas* as expressed in his reluctance to disturb the eighth drona stupa in the *naga* kingdom. The stupa, which resembles a mountain and was often associated with sacred mountains, could easily be "localized" to fit existing beliefs in sacred mountains.

In addition, both Buddhists and Hindus believed the universe was composed of a central continent from whose center arises Mt. Meru, the cosmic mountain that reaches into the heavens where the gods live. Local reverence for sacred mountains blended with the Indian vision of the cosmos and Mt. Meru. If a local chief or ruler could construct a palace that resembled both the local sacred mountain and the Indian sacred cosmos, and if he could identify himself with the locus of divine authority that resided in the sacred mountain and therefore in the temple palace, both his ritual authority and power would be significantly increased in ways familiar and acceptable to the local people. Many temple complexes in Southeast Asia appear to have served that purpose. Rulers ordered the construction of walled cities (to represent the chains of mountains) and reservoirs or moats (to represent the oceans surrounding the sacred mountains) around the central temple/palace where the ruler lived. (The temple/palace represented Mt. Meru.)

Aerial photographs reveal that the large reservoirs or moats around the temples of Angkor Wat and Angkor Tom, the temple/palaces associated with the Khmer Empire (c. 802–1431), were not connected to local fields. Therefore, they could not have been used for irrigation. It may seem odd to us that people went to great trouble to build giant reservoirs that they did not use. However, these reservoirs and the temple complexes they surrounded were very important because they helped rulers demonstrate their ritual authority and prove their legitimacy. Many Southeast Asian monarchs built

ritual mountain/temple/palaces and constructed stupas in conscious imitation of Ashoka. These kingdoms have been called "theater states" because the religious rituals the ruler performed at his ceremonial center were very like theatrical performances. The performances, symbolizing control over not only one's kingdom but the whole cosmos, attracted and awed neighboring peoples and drew them into the ruler's orbit. The kingdom became a copy of the cosmos. The king's actions imitated the gods' power, which made him responsible for the people's prosperity. The moral standard of the king and the happiness of his subjects were closely linked. A virtuous ruler ensured the prosperity of his lands while an unrighteous king destroyed it his kingdom.

The early centuries C.E., however, were not a golden age when the ideal Buddhist *chakravartin* ruled. A *chakravartin* might have to use force to win his kingdom before he could rule by the *dhamma* of Ashoka. That is why the legendary Ashoka's transformation from a malevolent ruler (Ashoka-the-Fierce) to a benevolent king (Ashoka-Dhamma) was appealing. Like him, aspiring Southeast Asian rulers could use violent or even treacherous means to gain territory, then, once in control, transform themselves into moral rulers. In addition, stories associated with the legendary Ashoka occasionally portray him as acting violently and eliminating those who opposed him. People were wary of rulers with absolute power, even Buddhist rulers, whom they knew to be concerned about their own prestige and power. In fact this reality only enhanced the relevance of Ashoka's legend: it served as a model for many monarchs, who used force or cruelty to gain control, then transformed themselves into righteous rulers.

Beginning in 65 C.E., Buddhism also reached Han China (210 B.C.E.–220 C.E.) However, unlike Southeast Asia where Buddhists encountered small and relatively weak "men of prowess," China was a highly developed civilization with a long philosophic tradition rooted in Daoism, Confucianism, and Legalism. The Confucian elite, having primarily this—worldly concerns—did not find the more transcendent Buddhist world view or its values emphasizing celibacy and renunciation of secular life particularly attractive. They asked, for example, "Why would a good Confucian want to leave his family and not fulfill his filial responsibilities?"

However, from the fall of the Han empire to the 6th century, the Middle Kingdom was fragmented into warring states and plagued by regional rivalries. Consequently, people found the Buddha's teachings about suffering more appealing. During this period of turmoil, nomadic leaders of the steppe lands northeast of China supported Buddhism, partly to increase their legitimacy, as Southeast Asian leaders had done, by identifying themselves with the sophisticated culture of India. Buddhist monks translated religious texts into Chinese, thereby merging many Buddhist ideas with Confucian and Daoist forms. Local Chinese heroes and deities became transformed into Buddhist bodhisatvas, that is, perfected beings who had deferred reaching nirvana until every fellow creature was saved.

Chinese architects transformed the stupa into the pagoda and also adapted Indian cave temples. Gradually Buddhist ideas of compassion, universal salvation, and escape from suffering, as well as the ethical content of the Eight-fold Path, became a lasting part of Chinese culture. Legitimacy for Chinese emperors during Han times rested on their having the Mandate of Heaven, which they demonstrated by carrying out prescribed rituals and displaying military might. As Buddhism spread through the land, the emperor deepened his legitimacy by supporting Buddhist communities and Buddhist rituals.

Significantly, imitation of the legendary Ashoka played an important role in the Sui Dynasty, which reunited the Middle Kingdom in the 6th century. The founder of the Sui (581–618) took the title Emperor Sui Wen Di. Following a long Chinese tradition, he and his army won the throne on horseback, but he knew he could not rule from the saddle. Therefore, he sought other means to establish his legitimacy and to ensure the unity of the country. Though he supported the study and practice of Confucianism, he looked to Buddhism to help consolidate his empire and provide him with strong legitimacy. He consciously imitated aspects of the legendary Ashokan model and the chakravartin ideal. He also claimed to follow Ashoka's ethical approach.

In 601 Emperor Wen ordered monks to distribute Buddhist relics, and to enshrine them he supervise the construction of stupas (pagodas) throughout the country. And in accord with Ashoka's example, he ordered that all the stupas be consecrated on the same day at the same time. All government activity was to stop for seven days while people honored the relics. By simultaneously enshrining the relics, the emperor wanted to proclaim, as Ashoka had done more than eight centuries earlier, that China was united in its support of Buddhism. Moreover, Buddhism was the means to unify all the diverse peoples, cultures and regions of his vast empire. Finally, Emperor Wen Di's efforts to propagate Buddhism as an instrument of state policy influenced Japan and Korea. During the height of his rule, leaders in both countries imported Buddhist ideas and attempted to copy aspects of the Sui model to achieve unity and legitimacy.

Of course, the success of Buddhism in China was not merely due to the patronage of dynastic leaders such as Wen Di. Land and money were given to Buddhist temples and monasteries. Monks traveled throughout the empire, founding the best hospitals in the world, providing low-cost hostels for travelers, and carrying out the Ashokan ideal of building roads and bridges and planting trees. The monasteries were also citadels of mathematics, astronomy, chemistry, and other sciences. Buddhism provided China with a universal ethic that was localized to support ancient Chinese ideals of family loyalty and filial piety. It also offered the transcendent values of reducing the sufferings of all earthly creatures and striving for their eventual salvation. This system of values induced both emperors and average people to acquire personal merit by giving to Buddhist charities, thus binding all peoples together in greater compassion.

## C. Teaching Activities

1. Briefly describe how religions, particularly Islam and Buddhism, have been spreading in the United States. Why might people in the U.S. be attracted to these religions? What connections might there be between the growth of particular religions in the U.S. and new patterns of immigration? How might some of the ideas in these religions be changing as people begin to adapt them to more traditional American values?

2. After having students read **Student Handout 17**, discuss with them the Southeast Asian idea of "men of prowess," as well as reverence for mountains, ancestors, and snakes/dragons (*nagas*). Discuss the idea that "big men" must convince people that they can "control the sun and rain" so that crops will grown and people will prosper. Ask students how a local reader might demonstrate that he is a "big man." Ask them to think about rituals or festivals (which may be like theater performances) that might impress people. What might a "big man's" palace look like? How might he dress or act? How would such ways of showing legitimacy be different from stationing soldiers throughout the land?

3. Referring to **Student Handout 18**, brainstorm with students how the example of Ashoka and the legends associated with him might help local leaders in Southeast Asia gain greater legitimacy. How could a leader let the people know he was imitating Ashoka? Considering Southeast Asians' reverence for sacred mountains, why might building stupas be a good way of enhancing legitimacy?

4. Discuss the Hindu/Buddhist idea of the cosmos, which has Mt. Meru at its center (See **Student Handout 19**). Discuss (or assign as homework) why this idea might appeal to Southeast Asians. How might a ruler use that idea to increase his legitimacy?

5. Show the class an overhead transparency of the diagram and photo of Angkor Wat (**Student Handout 20**). Also refer to **Student Handout 19** on "The Capital as the Magic Center of Empire." In what ways is the temple complex of Angkor Wat similar to the image of the cosmos with Mt. Meru at the center? Who lives on Mt. Meru? Who lives in the area that represents Mt. Meru in Angkor Wat? Discuss how this building complex might enhance the ruler's legitimacy. Introduce the concept of "theater state" by considering how people might react to lavish rituals performed on the site of Angkor Wat. Have students look for other examples of architecture being used to support a ruler's legitimacy. Why do you think members of Congress like to have their picture taken on the steps of the Capitol in Washington?

6. Discuss why a building might express and contribute to a ruler's legitimacy. Why might these concepts be more appealing to "men of prowess" than strategies, say, for building up an army?

Teachers may wish to save activities 7 and 8 for use in connection with study of China, particularly the Sui Dynasty. If so, these activities will offer a good opportunity to review student's understanding of Ashoka in world history.

7. Explain or review with students how the Han empire collapsed in the 3rd century C.E. and how, during the ensuing 300 years of disunity, many Chinese began to follow Buddhism. In reuniting the empire, the Sui emperor Wen Di (581–618) gained control by military force. But he also wanted to be identified as a Buddhist emperor. Distribute to students the edict that Emperor Sui Wen Di issued in 581 after his first great military victory (**Student Handout 22**). Ask students whether the emperor appears to be following Buddhist ideals.

8. Give students **Student Handout 23** titled "Relics and Stupas." Discuss why Emperor Sui Wen Di ordered the distribution of relics and construction of stupas. What conclusions might be drawn about the importance of Ashoka in the spread of Buddhism to China? What conclusions might be make about how rulers used Buddhism to help build their legitimacy?

# "Men of Prowess" in Southeast Asia

[One well-represented feature of social organization within the lowlands of Southeast Asia] is the downgrading of the importance of lineage based on claims to status through descent from a particular male or female. The relative unimportance of lineage means that we have to look elsewhere for cultural factors which promote leadership and initiative, and I suggest that leadership in interpersonal relationships was associated with the phenomenon of "big men." . . . The leadership of "big men" or . . . "men of prowess", would depend on their being attributed with an abnormal amount of personal and innate "soul stuff", which explained and distinguished their performance from that of others in their generation and especially among their own kinsman. . . . [a] person's spiritual identity and capacity for leadership were established when his fellows could recognize his superior endowment and knew that being close to him was to their advantage not only because his entourage could expect to enjoy material rewards but also, I believe, because their own spiritual substance, for everyone possessed it in some measure, would participate in his, thereby leading to rapport and personal satisfaction. . . .

The consequence . . . was that men of prowess, after their death, could be reckoned among their settlement's Ancestors and be worshipped. Ancestors were always those who, when they were alive, protected and brought benefits to their people. . . . Ancestor status had to be earned. Sites associated with Ancestors, such as mountains, supplied additional identity to the settlement status.

Source: O.W. Wolters. *History, Culture, and Religion in Southeast Asian Perspectives* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1982), 5-7.

## Imitating Ashoka in Southeast Asia

In the [Buddhist] chronicles, one monarch stands out: Ashoka Maurya. He becomes the exemplar par excellence for all Buddhist monarchs, embodying virtues of righteousness and justice, materially supporting the monastic order, and ensuring both political and religious harmony within the realm. In effect, Buddhist tradition constructs Ashoka as the historical embodiment of the mythic Buddhist world ruler (*cakkavattin*), one who embodies the *dhamma* and rules by it and who personifies the Ten Royal Virtues: generosity, moral virtue, self-sacrifice, kindness, self-control, non-anger, non-violence, patience, and adherence to the norm or righteousness. . . .

Ashoka's conversion to Buddhism and its consequences becomes the seminal event in the institutional history of Theravada Buddhism, . . . By following the example of King Ashoka these rulers not only lend their reign legitimacy and authority in a particular location, they also become part of a more universal Buddhist history. The religion they support literally has its roots in the person of the Buddha, whose physical presence magically resides in his relics, and their political rule is grounded in the legendary career of Ashoka who in turn, is a historical embodiment of the first world ruler. . . .

His [Ashoka's] story functions in an exemplary manner, inspiring other monarch of Southeast Asia to follow Ashoka's example of contributing lavishly to the monastic order. . . . Southeast Asian monarchs build stupa reliquaries as loci of popular Buddhist cult and symbolic axial centers of both cosmos and kingdom. . . .

The primary Buddhist symbol throughout Buddhist Southeast Asia has been the stupa. . . . In short, although the Buddhist stupa should not be restricted to a single meaning, for our purposes it represents the symbiotic relationship between sacred cosmology and kingship. The stupa, then, suggests that the ruler is empowered (legitimated) by his association with the creative-ordering-liberating forces of the universe be they Brahmainical deities or the Buddha and that by this very association the ruler, himself, becomes an active agent for the maintenance of the universe. . . .

Theravada Buddhism informed the construction of the classical conception of kingship in various ways. One . . . was the example of King Ashoka, . . . the righteous monarch who, although a powerful world ruler (*cakkavattin*), governed justly and righteously embodying the ten royal virtues. According to the Theravada chronicles of Southeast Asia, successful rulers . . . were those who emulated King Asoka. This suggests that the Asokan model had a mimetic potency: to imitate King Asoka legitimated a ruler as a *dhammaraja*. . . . Such mimesis, it was hoped, would guarantee peace and prosperity in the realm and enable the king to rule as a universal monarch (*cakkavattin*).

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# Mount Meru

## The Capital as the Magic Center of Empire

[According to both Hindu and Buddhist belief, Mount Meru, the cosmic mountain around which the sun, moon and stars revolve, forms the center of the universe. It is surrounded by seven mountain ranges separated from each other by seven annular seas. On its summit lies the city of the gods.]

In Southeast Asia, even more than in Europe, the central capital stood for the whole country. It was more than the nation's political and cultural center: it was the magic center of the empire. The circumambulation of the capital formed, and in Siam and Cambodia still forms, one of the most essential parts of the coronation ritual. By this circumambulation the king takes possession not only of the capital but of the whole empire. . . .

As the universe, according to Brahman and Buddhist ideas, centers around Mount Meru, so that smaller universe, the empire, was bound to have a Mount Meru in the center of its capital, which would be if not the country's geographical, at least in its magic center. . . . More frequently the central mountain was purely artificial, being represented by a temple only. . . . Practically every temple in Southeast Asia, whether Hindu or Buddhist, whether built of stone, brick or wood, being considered as an image of a mountain usually, though not invariably, of Mount Meru.

Source: Robert Heine-Geldern, "Conceptions of State and Kingship in Southeast Asia" (Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program Department of Far Eastern Studies Cornell University 1956), Paper No. 18, 2-3.

## Mount Meru or Mahameru

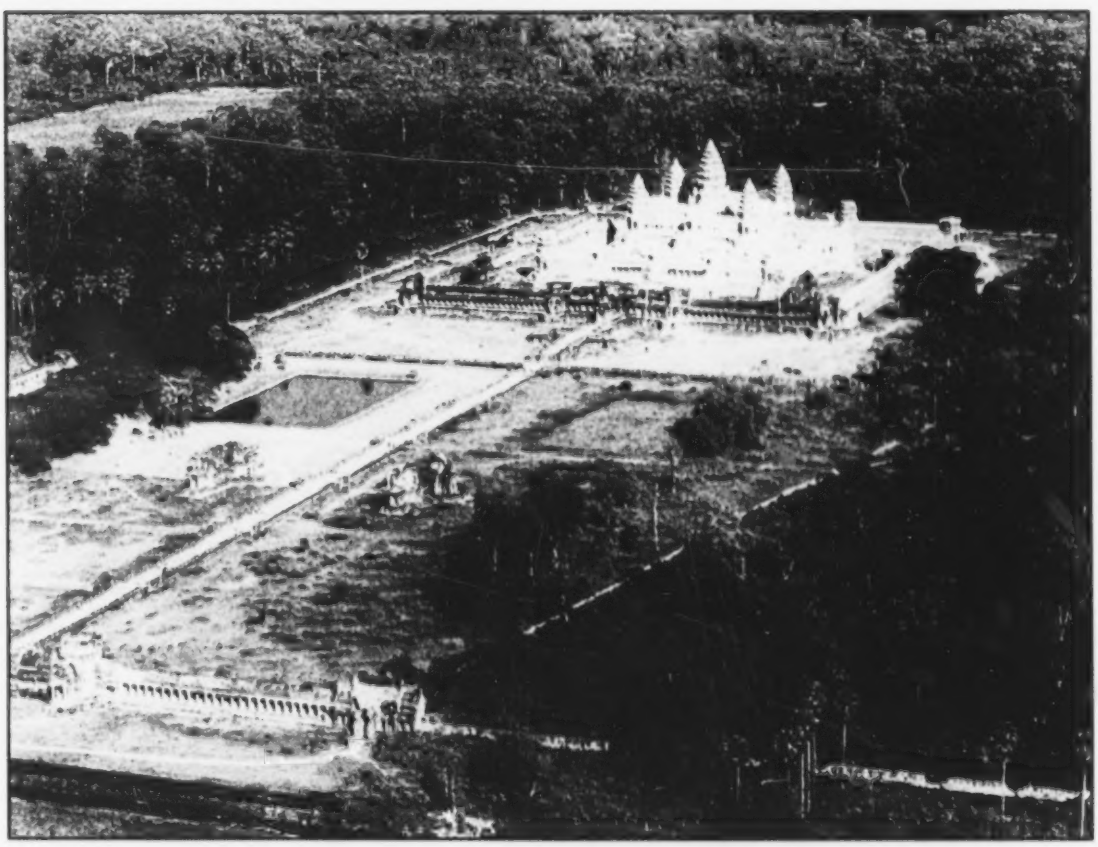
Angkor kings created the concept of the five peaked mountain where there was none. It was created in the form of a stepped pyramid, composed of five superimposed terraces of earth held by walls of laterite, and in many cases by five towers in quincuncial arrangement [referring to quincunx, a configuration of five objects] at the top to represent the five peeks. The five peaked mountain is a symbolic representation of mount Meru, the mythical center of the universe and dwelling place of the King of the Gods, Indra, from where he rules. The Meru of the Angkorians generally was built in the center, around which the city expanded and the king naturally housed his ruling deity on the top of it. Angkor Wat is the largest example of this concept of a man-made Meru of all the Angkor monuments.

Source: C. M. Bhandari, *Saving Angkor* (Bangkok: White Orchid Books, 1995). Used courtesy of Orchid Press, 98/13 Soi Apha Phirom, Ratchada Road, Bangkok 10900, Thailand.

## Angkor Wat, the Cosmic Mountain

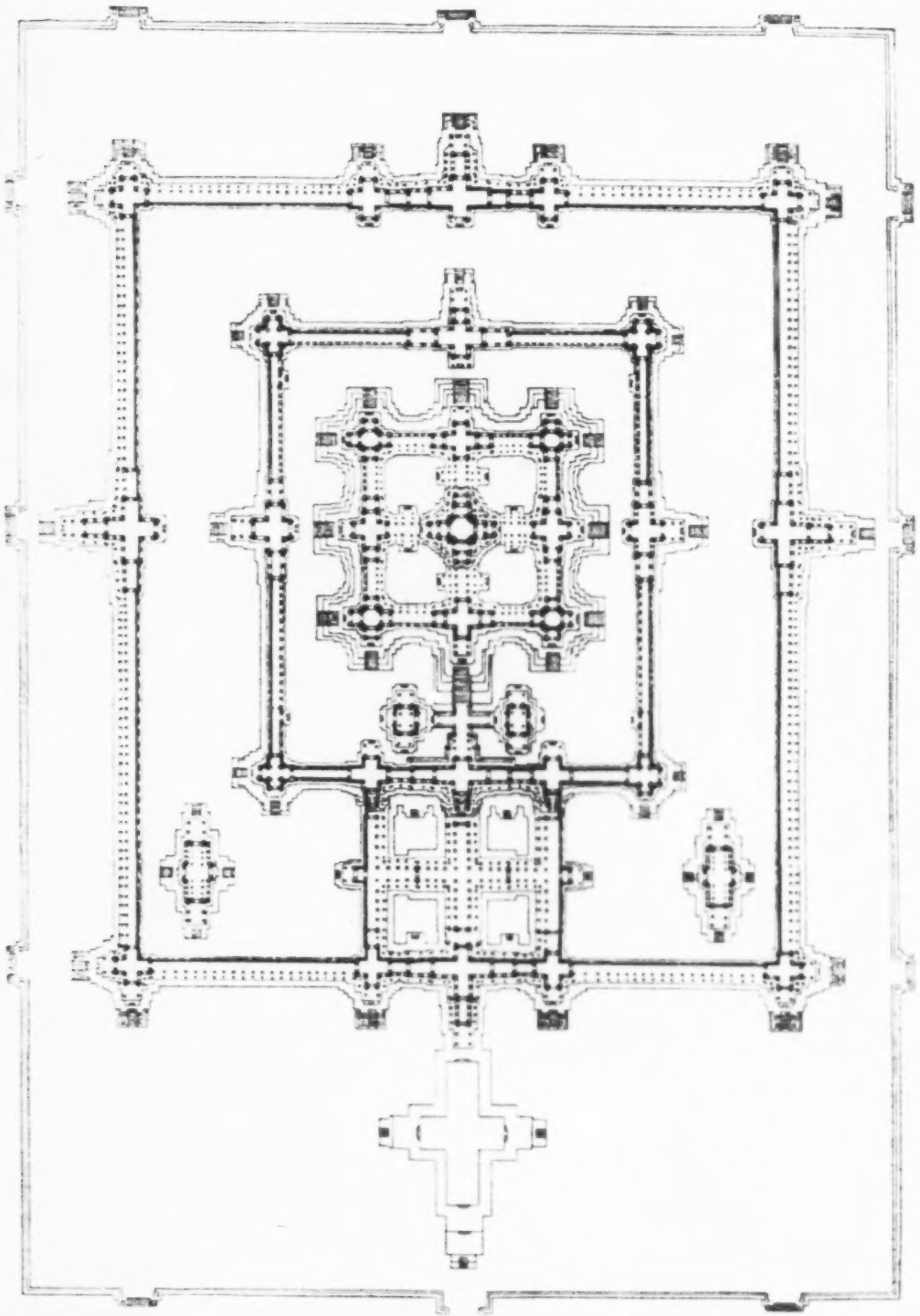
The building . . . rises in three terraces, one above the other, and it is out of the highest of the three that the great central tower springs up; four lower or inferior towers rise around it, and the whole structure is probably meant to symbolize Mount Meru, or the center of the Buddhist universe. That is all the more apparent when we consider that Meru is surrounded by seven circles of rocks; that there are seven circles on the central tower; that the sacred mount is supported on three platforms (corresponding to the three terraces) one platform a layer of earth, one of water, and one of wind; and that it rises out of the ocean. This part of the symbolism is indicated by the temple being surrounded by a moat, and indeed during the rains, when the plain is flooded, the whole stupendous structure would rise (like Meru from the Ocean) out of an unbroken sheet of water.

Source: John Thomson, *The Strait of Malacca, Indo-China and China* (New York: Macmillan, 1875).



Photograph from C. M. Bhandari, *Saving Angkor* (Bangkok: White Orchid Books, 1995).
Used courtesy of Orchid Press, 98/13 Soi Apha Phirom, Ratchada Road, Bangkok 10900, Thailand.

## Diagram of Angkor Wat



## Edict Issued by Emperor Sui Wen Di After his First Major Military Victory in 581 C.E.

With the armed might of a Cakravartan king, We spread the ideals of the ultimately enlightened one. With a hundred victories in a hundred battles, We promote the practice of the ten Buddhist virtues. Therefore We regard the weapons of war as having become like the offerings of incense and flowers presented to Buddha, and the fields of this world as becoming forever identical with the Buddha-land.

Source: Arthur Wright, *Buddhism in Chinese History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972), 67.

## Relics and Stupas

On the occasion of his birthday in 601 the emperor decided it was time to carry out his ambitious program of consolidation of his empire through Buddhism. On that day he issued an edict proclaiming the fact that he had taken refuge in the Three Jewels [the Buddha, the *dhamma*, and the religious community] and that he was desirous of his subjects' developing the thought of enlightenment and cultivating meritorious *karma*. To this end he dispatched thirty monks to the various prefectural centers, carrying incense and the sacred relics of the Buddha. After arrival at the prefectural centers the monks were to select appropriate sites for the construction of stupas to enshrine the relics. Before sending forth the thirty monks, the emperor had carefully packed the relics in jars. On this initial occasion thirty stupas were constructed, and at noon of the fifteenth day of the tenth month, 601, there was a simultaneous enshrinement of the sacred relics in the stupas. All government offices declared a seven-day holiday to celebrate the occasion, and the monastic community throughout the land observed the ceremony. At the same time the emperor also held an elaborate ceremony in the palace to commemorate the historic event. He did not do this just once. The very next year fifty-one more stupas were constructed for the enshrinement of relics, and in 604 there was a third distribution of the relics to thirty more stupas throughout the land. In all, 111 stupas were erected during the years 601–604 by the ruler to manifest his patronage of Buddhism.

The stupas were the symbols of the imperial support of Buddhism and were erected in places where the scenery was especially excellent. By the ceremony of simultaneous enshrinement of the relics, with the official and clerical community participating, he sought to convey the idea that the entire empire was united in its support of Buddhism. Such an attempt to propagate Buddhism as an instrument of state policy had never been attempted by previous rulers.

Source: Kenneth S. Ch'en, *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey, pp.* 200, 201. Copyright 1964 by Princeton University Press. Reprinted by permission of Princeton University Press

## Glossary

**Achaemenid Empire**. Great West Asian empire centered on Persia (550-330 B.C.E.). Set the standard for later empires. Conquered by Alexander the Great.

**Artha**. Hindu concept of political power. Survival and getting ahead in life, controlling others.

**Arthasastra**. Hindu text by Kautilya on power and political strategy. Advice to king on such matters as spying, setting a good example, conducting relations with friends and foes, and surviving in an amoral world.

**Ashoka Maurya**. The third emperor of the Maurya Dynasty 269 -232 B.C.E. Unlike his predecessors adopted a state-building policy based on Buddhist ethics. During his reign the dynasty reached its greatest expanse and cultural height.

**Asokavadana**. The story of the Legendary King Ashoka as the ideal chakravartan.

**Benin**. A state in the tropical rain forest of southern Nigeria that became a powerful kingdom in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

**Borobudur**. Sacred Buddhist monument in Sumatra built as a mandala, a stupa, and sacred mountain. A center of pilgrimage.

**Brahminism**. The Indian religion based on sacrifices and rituals as described in the Vedas.

**Brahmins**. The highest of the four varnas or classes of India. The group that controlled ritual practices and interpretations of sacred texts.

**Chakravartin**. Hindu concept of king, or "one who causes the wheel of *dharma* to turn."

**Charismatic authority**. Literally "filled with grace." The sociologist Max Weber's concept of one who leads by personal attraction, magnetism, appeal, and heroic example.

**Chandragupta Maurya**. First emperor of Maurya Dynasty.

**Confucian**. Those who follow the teachings of Confucius, the Chinese philosopher of the fifth-century B.C.E.

**Danda**. Hindu world for physical force or power.

**Dhamma**. Extension of the Sanskrit word *dharma*. In Buddhism it refers to the right path of thought and action, the way to enlightenment. Ashoka used the term to convey a sense of social as well as individual responsibility.

**Dharma**. A Sanskrit word signifying the social role that one is born into. Fulfilling that role in relation to the social order is the principle that perpetuates the universe.

**Drona stupas**. Stupas with Buddhist relics in them.

**Eight Fold Path**. Fundamental Buddhist teaching. 1) right understanding, 2) right resolve, 3) right speech, 4) right conduct, 5) right livelihood, 6) right effort, 7) right awareness, and 8) right concentration.

**Four Noble Truths**. The basic tenets of Buddha's teachings. 1) The world is suffering; 2) Suffering is caused by desire; 3) There is a way out of suffering; 4) The way out of suffering is through the eightfold path.

**Hammurabi**. King of Babylonia who ruled in the 18th-century B.C.E. and was known for his Law Code.

**Jains**. Followers of Mahavira (died c. 527 B.C.E.), who preached *ahinsa*, or non-violence to any living thing.

**Java**. The most densely populated island in the Indonesian archipelago. Its inhabitants are called Javanese.

**Karuna**. Buddhist concept of compassion for all living things. Do as little harm as possible, the Buddha taught.

**Khmer kingdom**. Cambodian kingdom that flourished from the 9th to the13th centuries.

**King Porus**. North Indian king of the fourth-century B.C.E. who led forces against Alexander the Great and lost.

**Kowtow**. The Chinese act of submission before a political superior. The act involves prostrations and bowing.

**Legitimacy**. The concept of political authority where leadership is based on acceptance and support from subjects or citizens. The lawful right to rule or head the government. Also the verb forms "to legitimize" or "to legitimate."

**Mahabharata**. One of the two great Hindu Epics. It tells the story of two families of a common lineage who go to war over which group has the legitimate right to the throne. Contains most of the philosophy and world view of the Hindu system.

**Mandala**. Indian design based on geometric forms that replicates the universe from the essence of all being outward.

**Man of prowess**. In Southeast Asian tradition a leader who is believed to have magical powers.

**Mauryan Empire**. The dynasty that ruled north and central India between 322 and 185 B.C.E.

**Naga**. Literally snake. A holy object to worshipers. Popular religion in Northeast India and Southeast Asia.

**Srivijaya**. Kingdom in the Indonesian archipelago which flourished from 683 to 1025 C.E.

**Shi Huang Di**. Founder of the Chin dynasty and the earliest Chinese empire. He is known as an autocratic and cruel ruler but also the one who unified China, built roads and other massive public works, and standardized weights, measures, and coins.

**Son of Heaven**. Chinese form of legitimacy based on the principle that the ruler has been granted the favor of heaven, or *t'ien*.

**Stupa**. A commemorative mound-shaped structure modeled on the sacred mountain. Builtt to pay homage to the Buddha. Many stupas contained relics of the Buddha.

**Tonle Sap**. The massive lake south of Angkor Wat in present day Cambodia.

**Mt. Meru**. For Hindus and Buddhists the mythic sacred mountain. The dwelling place of the Gods.

**Rock Edict**. The carved inscriptions on rocks and pillars commissioned by Ashoka to spread his concept of *dhamma* to the people of India.

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Photo by Donald James Johnson.

Detail of Great Stupa at Sanchi, Northgate western pillar.
This relief probably shows Ashoka, indicated by the small royal umbrella in his hand,, leaving Pataliputra.



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